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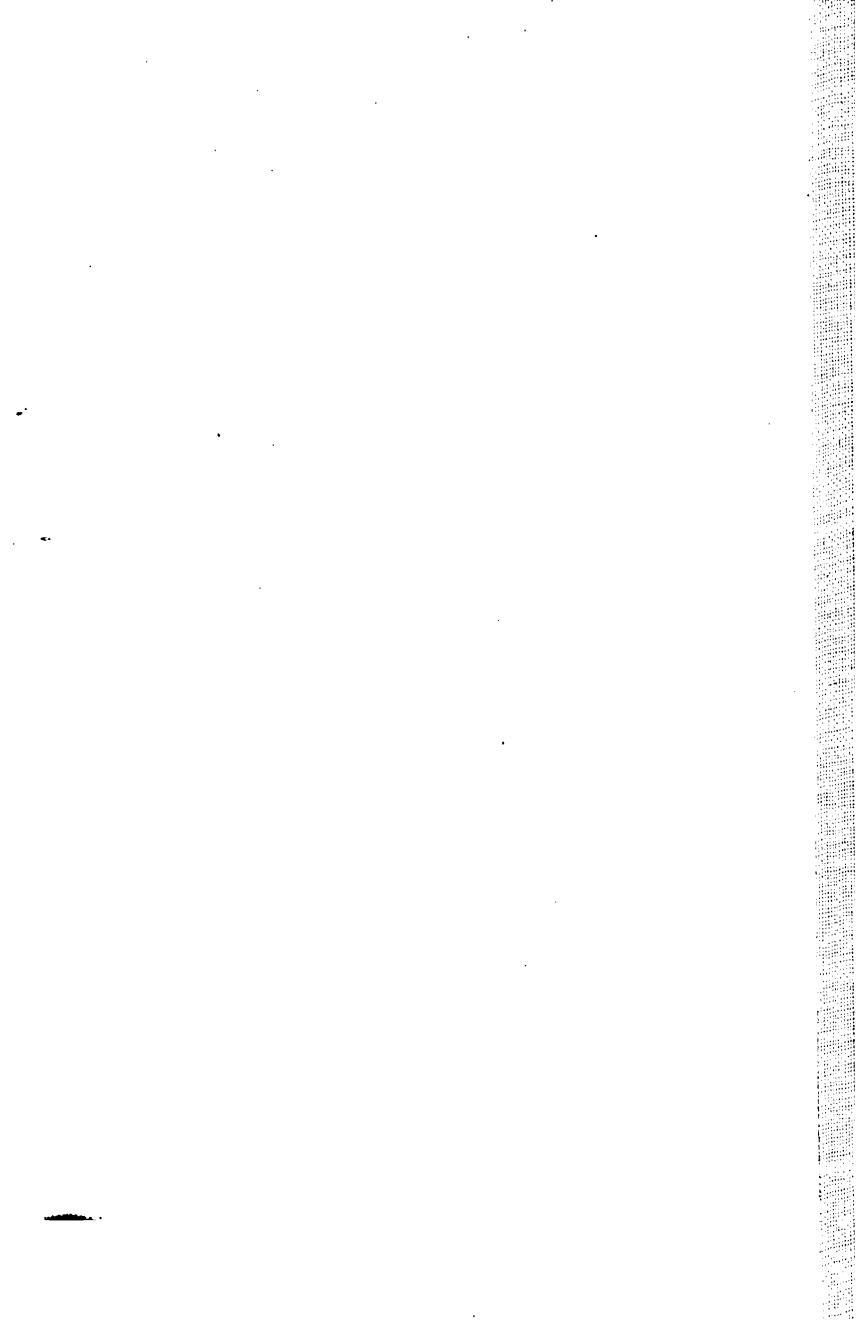
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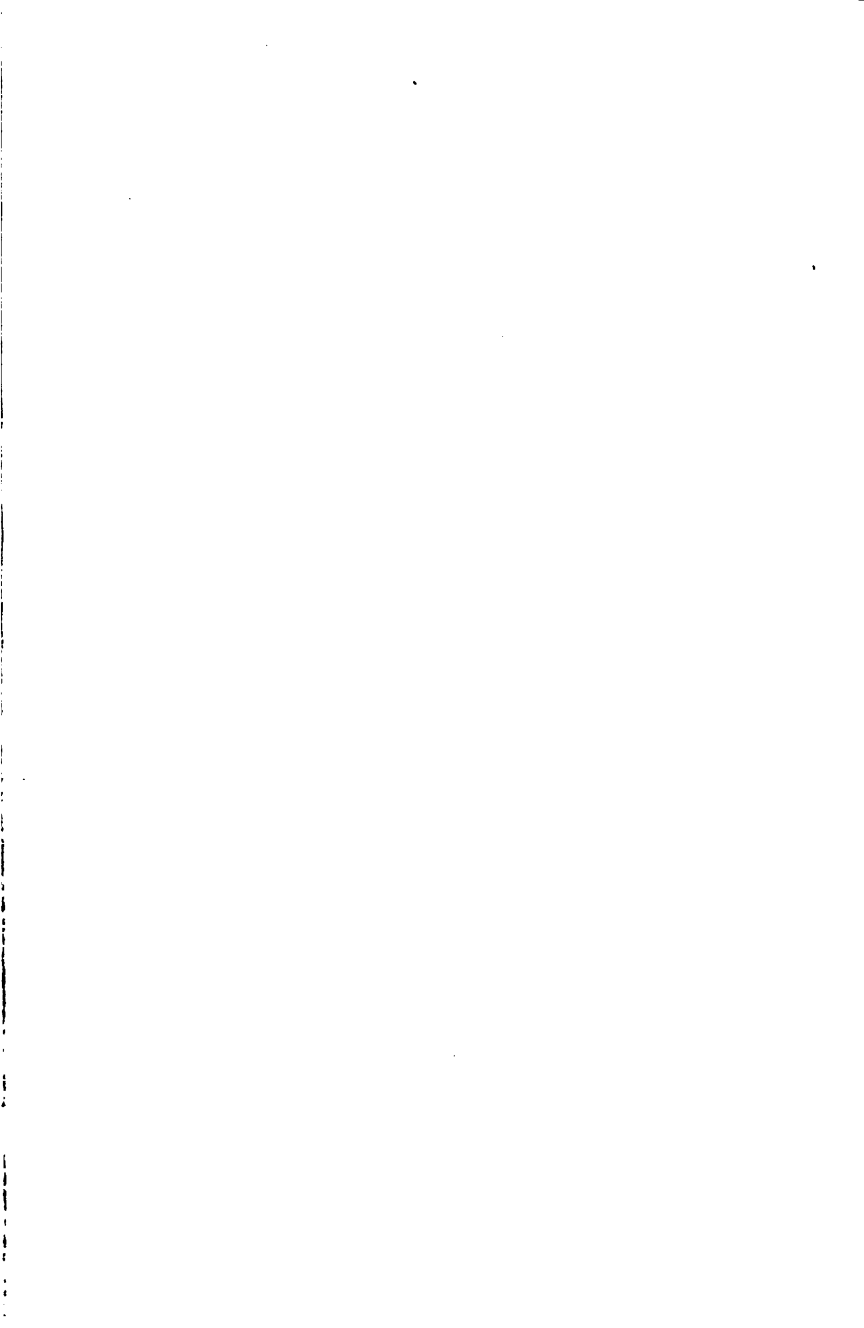


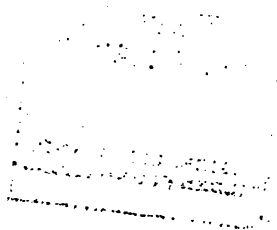
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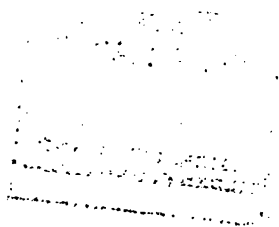








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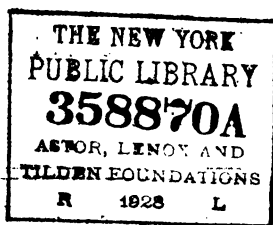
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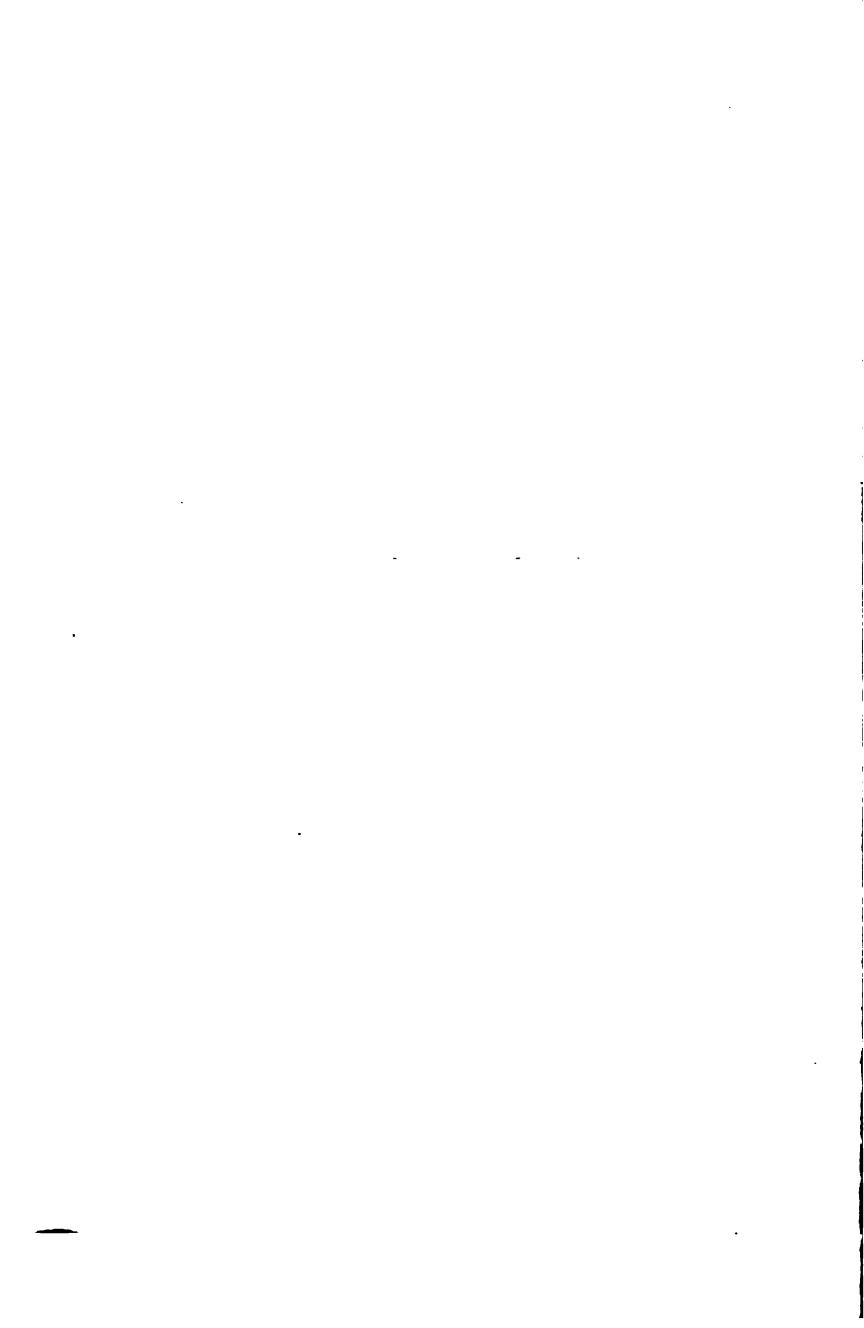
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TO MY MOTHER

1928

TRANSFER FROM C. A. MAR



A MAN AND A WOMAN

CHAPTER I

I CAN remember that when we were half-grown girls my sister Felice and I used to declare that there were two things we never would do, not even if we were old maids all our lives—we never would marry men named Smith or Jones.

Mother was a great reader of fiction and had chosen our names from one of her favorite novels. How in the world could Sybil—that's me—and Felice Randolph be expected to marry a Smith or a Jones? It would have been preposterous.

The other thing which held no attraction sufficient to tempt us into marriage—as we then thought—was the idea of being the wife of either a doctor or a minister. Yet Felice married the rector of our church, and I married a doctor.

I must tell you just a little about Felice. She was a year older than I, dark, petite, full of a spirit of innocent recklessness; ready to laugh and play furiously if she found any one to laugh and play with. Dwight Smith, whom she married, was a pedantic, narrow sort of a man, who had no thought for romance, and no room in his brain to appreciate her girlish ideals.

So Felice, dear little sister, just drifted along, doing the best she could. But with all fun, all happiness

of living crushed out of her until her baby boy came. Then she and the baby died. I think Felice wanted to die, and just took the baby along with her rather than have him grow up like Dwight.

After she left us I almost quarreled with my brother-in-law. His dissertations upon bowing to the will of God, his pedantic expressions of his own sorrow, which he showed in no other way, bored and disgusted me. Felice and I had been inseparable since babyhood, yet in spite of my heartache, my terrible longing for her, I never felt like quarreling with Providence because she had left me. I sort of knew she was happier than if she had lived—with Dwight.

She had also been unhappy because of his attitude toward other women. While invariably sweet tempered, Felice was of a jealous disposition, as was I, and Dwight's smug satisfaction and the pleasure he seemed to derive from the visits of his good-looking female parishioners did not add to her happiness. So when I stood over the flower-strewn grave of my darling sister and gazed at the mound under which she rested with her baby in her arms, I had a feeling that it was better so—that now she was happy.

Felice had been gone about a year when I first met Landry Jones. He was a young physician, just graduated from college, a nephew of old Doctor Jones whom I had known all my life, and who had cared for me during all my childish ailments. The old doctor was seventy-five years old, some thought too old to practice, and crippled with rheumatism. So many of the townspeople hailed the advent of new blood, which meant modern ideas, with pleasure.

Aside from that Doctor Landry Jones was a decided acquisition to the society of the town. Young men in

Horning, like those in most small towns, had left for the supposed greater advantages of the cities. And an educated young man of good manners and pleasing personality was soon *persona grata* with us all.

At first he paid me little attention; no more than he did several of the other girls. Yet from the first I had in my thought appropriated him. He had taken my fancy if nothing more. I wore my prettiest clothes and my most engaging smile for him. I broke engagements on the mere hope of seeing him, and often was disappointed. But I was a great favorite with his uncle, and that I considered an advantage. Anyway I liked him very, very much indeed.

And this in spite of the fact that he was a doctor and that his name was Jones.

Landry Jones was a tall man, over six feet. He had dark brown hair and eyes, a finely shaped nose and a determined chin. Also, he had the handsomest mouth I have ever seen, and perfect teeth.

"When that new doctor smiles any girl would leave home and mother for him," Claire Adams said. Claire was given to slangy expressions, but was a great favorite.

It goes without saying that Landry was invited everywhere. Really he was a godsend to hostesses. He played bridge and tennis, he golfed and danced; what more could one ask?

From the first he did not lack for patients—that is, of a certain sort—those with mild ailments. People who were very ill still called in the old doctor, as well as one from a neighboring town.

"They'll soon learn to trust me," he said with a laugh when told of it.

He kept his office hours scrupulously, but after that,

if he had no calls to make, he would wander off into the fields with one or the other of us girls gathering wild flowers.

In speaking of his practice he said:

"The people of this town are so used to uncle, I am surprised that they stand for my advanced ideas. He's hopelessly old-fashioned as regards medicine."

"They are ready for you," I told him. "Many of the people, those who can afford it, have been sending out of town for a physician, at the same time keeping your uncle in consultation. But they feel that he is old, not modern enough, and, while they still employ him, and always will, they want some one else if the case is complicated."

"And you think they will let me be that 'some one'?" he asked, smiling down at me. "I am afraid you flatter."

I felt the hot blood in my cheeks and dropped my eyes. I had not meant to flatter; I had said only what I really thought. And I couldn't help a little happy feeling that we had become a bit confidential; that he had talked of his business with me. You see, he was so different from the young men of the village; so much more clever, and understood me so much better.

Only two or three of our boys had gone to college and they had immediately gone to some city to make their fortunes—or to fail. We girls were awfully disappointed when none of them settled in Horning, so, really, Landry had things pretty much his own way.

"Who does he think he is?" Robert Huber grumbled.

Robert was the son of the village postmaster, rather good-looking in a bold sort of a way, and until Landry's advent, my devoted follower.

I only laughed. I hoped Landry would become

friendly enough with me to cause notice. But, as I have said, he one day would appear devoted to me, the next show the same attention to Claire or some other girl. Really, it was exasperating.

The old doctor used to tease me when he met me in the street.

"How do you like Landry, Sybil? Don't you think he looks like his uncle?" he would ask; then his hearty laugh would ring out. Old Doctor Jones was awfully homely, and he always sort of made fun of it himself.

"No, he doesn't look a bit like you; he's not as good looking," I would joke in return.

But the old doctor was not always that way. I remember one day mother called him in as he was passing to give him some crullers. Mother was a famous cook. She left me with the doctor while she went for them, and he began talking of Landry—his future.

"If he marries the right girl he will be all right. But a girl who marries a doctor has got to make up her mind to be self-sacrificing—self-effacing at times. His responsibilities are great; and a narrow, jealous woman can ruin the most brilliant man in the profession—if he lets her; or she can be of the greatest help."

CHAPTER II

I USED to love to watch Landry walk along the street with his free swinging stride which emphasized his vitality. I soon found out the time he took his early morning walk—for exercise, and would stand at the window and watch for him, then go back to bed.

I had commenced to go out again and join in the simple pleasures of the young people. I ran into Landry everywhere. No gathering seemed complete without him. He commenced to single me out instead of treating me exactly as he did the others. Often he would take me home and stand and talk a few moments on the porch if it were too late to ask him in. He also occasionally sent me flowers and invited me to the only theater the town boasted.

I was very happy at this time, yet frequently when he would break an engagement, pleading a professional call, I would feel injured, wondering if he was really busy or if it was just an excuse.

Once he said to me: "A doctor who has his way to make in his profession cannot afford to neglect any one or anything that will help him along. I'm as poor as the proverbial church mouse, which means that I have got to hustle every minute. Then, too, Sybil, I love my profession. A doctor has to if he succeeds."

One beautiful day in May Landry asked me to be his wife. I laughingly told him that I had sworn a terrible oath that I never would marry a doctor, nor a man named Jones. As he took me in his arms and pressed his lips to mine he answered:

"You are going to do both."

Landry told me, when we had grown a little accustomed to the idea that our love was mutual, that he had loved me the first time he saw me, but because of my year of mourning he had hesitated to intrude upon me, although it was hard to keep it to himself. He begged to be married immediately, saying he had waited long enough; that a doctor needed a wife because people preferred a married to a single man as a family physician, and a lot of other things which I have forgotten. As there was no reason why I should insist upon a long engagement, we were married the last of June.

Laughingly, my girl friends had reminded me of my old boast that I should never marry a man named Jones or a doctor, and one of them, bolder than the rest, said:

"I should think you would be afraid to do it after the sad way Felice's marriage turned out."

Some way the suggestion remained with me, and I mentioned it to Landry. He kissed away my tears, while he drew a wonderful picture of what our lives together would be.

"Why do you object to a physician as a husband?" he asked, again drawing me into his arms.

"I just know I shall be jealous of the women who pretend they are sick so they can call you," I pouted.

Landry laughed long and merrily.

"You flatter me and malign your own sex," he answered.

"But I shall! I hate them already," I returned, as I snuggled in his arms.

"What a child you are, Sybil." Then more seriously, "I know you will be a darling, sensible little girl. How old are you, dear? Funny I don't know, isn't it?"

"I'm almost twenty; my birthday is on the Fourth of July."

"So I'm to have a sort of a sky-rocket wife, am I? There's one sure thing, I won't have to give you any birthday parties—the nation will see to that!" and we both laughed heartily at his nonsense.

I could see plainly that Landry didn't take me at all seriously when I told him I should be jealous of his patients: but I knew that I should. Yet had I known just how miserable I was to be, and how unhappy I was going to make Landry, I think, much as I loved him, I should have hesitated long before consenting to be his wife.

Landry, like most men, didn't care very much about a big wedding; but mother overruled him. She had only one daughter now, she told him, and proposed to have her married properly. Dear mother's ideas of what was proper were the accepted ideas of society.

"A girl usually loves the first man she marries, no matter how many husbands she has," mother quoted. "She may go through the ceremony two or three times, and thoroughly respect the men; but every girl likes a wedding, and Sybil isn't going to be cheated of hers."

"I'm so glad you explained, Mrs. Randolph!" Landry exclaimed laughing. "And just for telling me Sybil loves me, I am going to call you 'mother' right away."

"The girls would be horribly disappointed if I didn't have a wedding," I broke in. "Claire Adams was over yesterday and helped me make a list of the bridesmaids."

"All right, have your way. I'll have mine, you see if I don't, when we are married." Then he added: "And to please you, I would be married in the public

square with a brass band and all the rest of the trimmings."

Mother laughed gayly.

"I shall be happy to have you call me mother, Landry. I never have had a son," her tone changed quickly. "My boy died when he was born."

So, of course, mother had her way. We were married in church. Father gave me away, and my most intimate girl friends were my bridesmaids. Starr Jordan was Landry's best man. He arrived only an hour before the wedding, so I didn't see him until we reached the church. He had been Landry's roommate and chum in college.

The bridesmaids looked perfectly lovely. They all wore pale orchid-colored chiffon dresses with big picture hats trimmed with orchids and pale pink sweet peas. Claire Adams was a dream, and Starr Jordan never took his eyes off of her.

All the people whom I had known since I was a little girl were in church, and they all cried. I wonder why people weep at weddings? I should think it would make the bridegroom feel as if he were doing something wrong, as though he were stealing the family plate or something equally awful.

Landry gave the ushers and best man stickpins, and gave the bridesmaids the dearest little old-fashioned reticules, with which they were delighted. We had a fine big reception afterward—that is, every one said it was fine. It was all rather hazy and mixed up to me. Then old shoes and rice were thrown at us as we left for the station. Some one had tied white ribbons on the whip of the coach, and we nearly missed our train trying to get the big white bows off the handles of our

trunks. They had been meant to stay forever, I think.

But it was not until we were really started that I felt that I was married at all. Then when Landry and I were alone in the stateroom, the train speeding us away from home, it came over me with a rush.

I was Landry's wife. Instead of Sybil Randolph I was Mrs. Landry Jones.

I don't see how newly married people can bear to go to fashionable resorts or crowded hotels for their honeymoons. We spent ours in a little cottage belonging to a friend of Landry's who loaned it to us for his wedding gift. The ocean came right up to our front door, and from the back we could see the blue and purple haze of distant mountains, the splash of the water on the sand as the tides rolled in and out was restful, and I never grew tired of looking at the mountains.

I feared at first I would be lonely in this little cottage so far away from all my friends; but I never was. Landry was so thoughtful, so gentle, so loving that I could have remained there forever. At least, that is the way I felt then.

CHAPTER III

I WAS as happy as the day was long. We rode, we read, we sailed and took long walks by the sea. Sounds prosaic, doesn't it? But don't forget that I was very much in love, and that Landry spent most of his time telling me how much he loved me—how perfect I was. Almost any girl would be happy under the circumstances.

It was still often cool though July. The wind came down from the mountains, the breeze from off the sea, and occasionally we found a log fire grateful. Then we popped corn or roasted peanuts and marshmallows for all the world like two children. And really what else were we? I was twenty, Landry twenty-six.

When I shut my eyes now after all these years, I can see Landry looking at me through partly closed lids, his love shining in his eyes as he shook the big corn popper over the coals; and then when it was full almost to bursting he would turn the still crackling kernels into a pan. And while he refilled the popper I would pour a generous quantity of salted butter over the hot corn.

The little intimacies of such a life are so different from the acquaintances made amid livelier surroundings. Why, one is scarcely even acquainted before marriage, and afterward—for the first few weeks—a daily introduction is almost a necessity.

The month of our honeymoon was soon gone. On the morrow we were to return to Horning. Old Doctor Jones had had Landry's name put beside his own on the sign, and in spite of our happiness I could see that

Landry was anxious to begin what he called his "regular practice."

Not a cloud darkened my horizon. Not the slightest fear of unhappiness suggested itself as we took possession of the cottage the old Doctor had given us as his wedding present, and which, during our absence, had been remodeled and put in perfect condition.

I can remember what fun we had putting it to rights; selecting the furniture, then arranging it to suit ourselves. We moved each piece several times to get the best effect. Some of our wedding presents were exquisite and made our living room very attractive. Father and mother had furnished our dining room, and I was amazed at their extravagance. The room was papered in Delft blue, the furniture of mahogany. The dishes were of Delft, and quaint candlesticks and other homey touches made the room a delight.

Landry had a sign made: "Landry Jones, M. D.," and put it under the bell. It was the first thing which awakened to any degree the old feeling I had always had about a doctor.

"Do you intend to see patients at the house as well as at the office?" I asked.

"Certainly, if it is necessary," Landry answered without looking up from a medical treatise he was reading.

"But, Landry, if you make your calls and keep your office hours, I shouldn't think it would be necessary to turn our home into a shop!" I exclaimed, annoyed because he treated my complaint so lightly.

"Don't be foolish, Sybil. A doctor must let people know where he lives," as though that ended it.

I said nothing more at that time, but I did not feel right. Landry while waiting for patients continued

his studies. He was dreadfully ambitious, very anxious to make name for himself in his profession. He told me that some time, when he could afford it, he wanted to go abroad to study.

I resented his desire to spend more time in study. I was perfectly willing he should go abroad—if he would take me—but spend his time in study! That was ridiculous. He had studied all his life; now if he had any time outside of his practice it belonged to me.

We had been in our home just a month. I had given a small house-warming, and we had been entertained until Landry grumbled that he wished they would let him alone, that he had his work to attend to. Then all suddenly the old doctor was taken very ill.

"It's an ill wind, Sybil, that blows no one good," the old doctor said as I, at Landry's wish, went over to see how he was. "Here I am, laid up for God knows how long, and every one in town needing me. Well, Landry can tend them."

I knew there was a great deal of sickness, especially among children. Several cases of measles and chicken-pox had appeared in the poorer quarter of the town, and as the children had been attending school, others would probably follow.

"Oh, he'll get along all right," I assured him when I left; but all the way home I was thinking that it would keep Landry away from me, even more than usual.

I think Landry was so sure, had felt so positive that I would at once adapt myself to my changed life, the constant calls upon his time, that when I failed to do so, and was discontented and unhappy he was unreason-

ably disappointed. So when I complained because he had to leave me alone that evening to attend those cases of which the old doctor had told me, he spoke sharply to me for the first time.

"I am surprised at you, Sibyl. You married me, a doctor, knowing very well that if I were to make a success I should have to be out whenever it was necessary; and before we have been married three months you are finding fault. I'm sorry, dear, but I'm afraid you will have to try to content yourself with things as they are."

"Well, I don't care; you might keep your evenings for me," I sputtered. "I should be of as much consequence to you as those young ones down in the factory district!" Landry looked at me a moment, then again repeated:

"I am surprised at you, Sibyl," in a grieved tone, instead of taking me in his arms and telling me he loved me, and that even if he did have to go out he'd be loving me all the time he was gone.

The result of Landry's attitude was that I spent the evening on the couch crying. When he came home, tired and wet from the rain, it made him cross to find me in tears. I think he was just a little disgusted as well.

All the delicious intimacy of the weeks of our honeymoon was gone. It seemed to have evaporated when the realities of life had to be faced.

I did not mean to be cross and disagreeable; to demand more than I considered my rights. But what I thought my due, and what Landry thought he owed his patients kept us constantly clashing.

"Do you remember that you used to say that you wouldn't marry a doctor because if you did you'd be

jealous of his patients?" Claire Adams asked one day.

"Yes——" I replied, "but, Claire, it isn't the patients, it's the time he has to spend with them that I mind."

"You just wait until some fascinating female gets sick and sends for him. Then see how you'll talk," she teased.

"Oh, I'm not afraid!" I boasted.

"By the way, you've heard me speak of Dot Chamberlain, haven't you, Sybil? She's the girl I met the year mother took me to Europe with her. She lives in New Haven now. Wasn't the doctor a Yale man?"

"Yes. But what has that to do with that girl? I do remember your speaking of her. You said she was awfully pretty, didn't you?"

"Pretty! She's a dream; and, Sybil, she's coming to visit me, and she knows the doctor, so you must help me entertain her."

"Of course I shall, gladly," I replied; but long after Claire left I speculated as to the acquaintance Landry might have had with this girl whom Claire called "a dream."

Most people's lives are made up of high and low lights, sunshine and shadow. Mine has been no exception. But as I look back I can't help but see that many of the dark places were of my own making, and that often I wilfully ignored the high lights, so making the shadows deeper.

Each day I was becoming more in love with Landry, each day more impatient of what I considered his neglect. Then one evening after dinner he took me in his arms and told me once more, just as he had told me when he was courting me, of his love. We were in the garden, my old-fashioned flowers bordering the walk.

The night was perfect in its beauty, but after he had talked to me a while nature seemed to have clothed herself anew in a wonderful garment of moonlight and stars to show her appreciation of my happiness.

Some skyey spirit of abstract beauty seemed to have descended upon us. I could have cried for joy. Instead I threw my arms around Landry's neck and declared that never, never again would I complain of his patients; never find fault with him.

The very next day Dot Chamberlain arrived.

Claire called me up early in the morning and told me. She begged me to call at once, and I promised to do so. When Landry came in I spoke of it, and then remarked:

"I'd forgotten all about it, Landry, but Claire said you knew her friend."

"I knew her; who is she?" he asked, looking a bit surprised.

"Her name is Dot Chamberlain, and she lives in New Haven."

I was looking directly at Landry or I shouldn't have seen the sudden flush, the momentary darkening of the eyes; so quickly were they gone, as he returned:

"Yes, I did meet a Miss Chamberlain during my senior year, and I believe she was called Dot."

The demon jealousy took possession of me at once, although I tried very hard not to show it.

"Is she pretty?" I asked, watching him closely, all my promises of the night before forgotten; all his protestations of love overshadowed by suspicion.

"Yes, in a way. She's very blonde, with big blue eyes."

"You paid her some attention, didn't you?" I queried, still watching him.

"A little; I guess all the boys did. She was quite a

favorite, and no wonder. She was a jolly, good-natured little thing, always ready for anything."

"Claire is planning to entertain a great deal for her," I volunteered.

"If I haven't forgotten the lady's tastes she will enjoy anything that insures her a good time," Landry replied, a little self-consciously, I thought.

With a yawn he laid down his magazine.

"I think I'll go to bed, dear," he said. "I've had rather a hard day, and to-morrow promises to be even worse." Then as I said nothing, "Aren't you coming, or do you think it too early?"

"I'm not a bit sleepy," I returned. "I think I'll read a while," and I opened a book.

"Don't be long, dear," Landry said as he kissed me.

After he left me I sat a long time with the book in my hand, without reading a word. Why had he flushed when I spoke of Dot Chamberlain? And why had he run off to bed while I was talking about her? Evidently he didn't want to discuss her. I wondered if he had made love to her; if he had said the same things he had to me. All my love for him, all my trust in him were disturbed by the knowledge that he had known more or less intimately the girl whom Claire had declared so lovely.

An hour had passed when I heard a noise in the hall, the door opened and Landry, in a bathrobe, stood on the threshold.

"Aren't you coming, dear?" he asked.

"Right away," I answered as I extinguished the light. "I thought you were asleep by this time."

"I couldn't go to sleep until you came," he replied, throwing his arm across my shoulders as we went up the stairs.

CHAPTER IV

I HAVE determined to tell my story without reserve. I shall disclose just what it means to a high-strung, finely sensitized girl to marry a man whose work makes him daily almost as much the Father Confessor of other women as does that of either the Priest or the Clergyman. When you add that the girl has a naturally jealous disposition, a love of life and gayety which she wishes him to share, it presents a problem hard to solve. And then to be told not to ask questions!

Upon one point Landry was firm. He would not discuss his patients, or their affairs, with me.

"I cannot tell you, Sybil," he would reply to my queries, "and you will be much happier, dear, if you will cease asking questions."

"Why will I be happier if I don't ask questions?" I asked with a show of indignation.

"Sybil, you must understand, dear," he returned very seriously, "that whatever is told a doctor is as inviolate as if told a priest."

"But I am your wife! I'd never breathe a thing you told me to anybody!"

"What a child you are, Sybil!" Then even more soberly. "I hope you are going to be sensible about this. There is something called professional ethics, which precludes making any one a sharer of the confidences of a patient. Do not ask me concerning them. I cannot satisfy what really is only idle curiosity on your part; and as I said you will be much happier if

you cease thinking of such things. Remember, I am the keeper of other's secrets, not my own."

I was hurt, angry, and a little bit astonished at the stand Landry had taken relative to his relations with his women patients—the men, of course, didn't interest me. I asked tearfully:

"What about me? How would you like me to hear men's secrets and not tell you? I thought I should at least possess the confidence of the man I married."

"You have my entire confidence, Sybil!" he replied a bit impatiently, "and anything relating only to myself I'll gladly tell you; but not the confidences of my patients," he finished; then, I imagine, straightway forgot all about our conversation.

Not so I. Long after he had left me I sat quietly tormenting myself with jealous doubts. So I was to ask no questions even when Landry was closeted alone with the attractive girls and women of the town. If I had been sensible, reasonable, unselfish, I might have saved myself and others much unhappiness, much sorrow.

The telephone jingled, interrupting my thoughts.

"Hello, Sybil! Run over this afternoon, will you?"

"Certainly, I shall," I told Claire. "I'll be over about 4 o'clock," as anxious to go as she was to have me.

I took the greatest pains with my toilette. Both Claire and Landry had said that this Dot Chamberlain was very pretty. I had been called pretty, too, if I didn't have yellow hair and china-blue eyes like a wax doll.

I had a lovely new afternoon gown which I had never worn. It was of soft white wash satin, simply made but very becoming. With it I wore a pale green girdle, and a big floppy white hat faced with the same shade. I wore white shoes and stockings and carried a

white parasol edged with a narrow band of the green. When I was ready to start I was satisfied that I looked well, even before Kate, my maid, said:

"You look lovely, Mrs. Jones, if I may make so bold."

"I want you to meet Mrs. Jones, Landry Jones' wife, Dot—Miss Chamberlain," Claire introduced. Then added, laughingly, "Please be Sybil and Dot to each other, won't you?"

As the charming golden-haired girl came toward me and offered her hand with a laughing assent, my heart sank. I had never seen a prettier picture. The masses of her hair—like spun gold—were piled carelessly, it seemed, on top of the dainty head. And her big blue eyes looked so innocently out upon the world that had Landry not known her I should have at once fallen in love with her.

"Sybil is such a pretty name," she said later, "and there is no nickname for it. My name is Margaret, but I have been called Dot all my life. Really, I imagine people think I have no other name. Now yours is unusual," she purred. "Claire told you that ages ago I knew your husband? He was awfully good-looking and popular then. I hope for your sake he isn't quite so attractive now."

"Why?" I asked, knowing full well what she meant.

"Oh, all the girls will fall in love with him if he hasn't changed!" she laughed.

I laughed with her, made some stilted reply, and soon left, after inviting them to tea the following day.

"How well did you know that Chamberlain girl?" I asked Landry when he came in.

"Nice way to speak of Dot," he laughed. Then, "Why, as well as any fellow knows a nice girl whom

he takes out occasionally and who is received at her home."

"From the way she spoke of you I imagined you were rather intimate, were you not?"

"Well, yes, for a time perhaps you might call it intimate. But I forgot all about her as soon as I saw you."

"Oh, don't feel you have got to say something to please me because I have found out about her," I pouted.

"Whatever's the matter, Sybil? I have told you all there is to tell about any relation which existed between Dot and me, and——"

"Did you ever care for her?" I queried, watching him closely, and again that dark flush swept across his face for a moment.

"What a question box you are to-night, Sybil! I liked Dot very much; but I am married to you, and she has nothing to do with either of us. You'll also like her, I am sure. How long is she going to remain?"

"I'm sure I don't know! I'll find out if you want me to," I snapped. "I've invited them over to tea tomorrow afternoon. If you come home about 5 o'clock you can renew your acquaintance with Miss Chamberlain."

"I'll come if I can—that is, if you want me to. What ails you, Sybil? I don't seem to understand what you are driving at. You talk as if you thought there might have been something between Dot Chamberlain and me which I would not, or was ashamed to confess."

"Oh, no, I don't!" I childishly replied, "but why do you flush whenever I ask you anything about her? Some women would be mighty sure there was more than you acknowledge between you."

"Don't be silly!" and without another word he

tramped off upstairs to bed, and this time he neither called to know if I was coming or came to fetch me.

"I'll bet there was something between them," I mused as I sat alone. "I'll bring them together and watch them."

I hated to be alone, to sit alone; but Landry had been in bed over an hour before I turned out the lights and followed him. In that hour I had devised a scheme of pretending fondness for Dot Chamberlain, so that I could observe Landry's actions when she was around.

Dora Lawrence telephoned that her sister was ill. Would Landry come over when he returned from his calls? She had telephoned the office and found him out.

Louisa Lawrence was one of the prettiest girls in Horning, and the greatest flirt. At first I thought I wouldn't give Landry the message. I didn't believe she was sick, anyway. It was just an excuse to get him there. Then I didn't quite dare do that, so as soon as he came in he went immediately to her.

When he returned, after being gone some time, I asked him:

"What's the matter with Louisa?"

"She is quite ill, and very nervous," he replied, then picked up a book and commenced to read.

But I was not so easily satisfied.

"Why should Lou be nervous? That's too silly," I remarked. Landry paid no attention; never looked up.

"Didn't you hear me speak, Landry?" I grumbled.

"Yes, dear. But remember what I told you the other night. You are not to question me, you know." He spoke good-naturedly, but there was a stern look about his mouth I had learned to know and dread.

"I will not be shut out in this way!" I stormed. "I will not!"

"My dear Sybil," Landry commenced, laying down his book, "when will you learn that a doctor is not free to retail—even to his wife—gossip concerning his patients? I wonder, in view of the way you are talking tonight, how you would act if you had real cause for complaint?"

"Real cause! If you don't consider that I have real cause now, I do! My husband goes to see a very pretty girl, one who everybody knows is the greatest flirt in town, and stays an hour. Then refuses to tell me anything about it. I'd like to know your definition of a real cause?" I stormed, now thoroughly worked up and angry.

I thought I had cause enough for complaint if Landry didn't. I, his wife, was barred from sharing the secrets he had with other women; and was shut out from his confidence. Yet I had not any conception of how a woman's heart can ache.

Once more, after hot words, which seared, he went upstairs, leaving me alone.

Deeper and deeper into myself I went as I sat there; and the yearning to be loved as I loved him rushed over me. Suddenly nothing else mattered. I rushed upstairs and into his arms, muttering words of love and remorse. Landry held me close and whispered his love and forgiveness, smoothing my hair, and pressing kisses on my lips.

I went to sleep in his arms determined never again to make both myself and him unhappy by foolish doubts and jealousy. I never had had premonitions, or warning glimpses of what the future held for me, as so many

do, else I should have gone to rest less positive of myself, my happiness. Perhaps Fate dared not let me see too closely.

Landry was very gentle and loving the next morning, and when I reminded him that Claire and Dot were coming over for tea, he promised to try and get home. Then he took my face between his hands and said:

"I love you, Sybil. If you will remember that, things will be easier."

The girls came over about four o'clock. I took them into the garden, which I myself tended, and of which I was very proud, and picked them each a nosegay of my old-fashioned posies. Then, at Claire's request, I exhibited some of my prettiest wedding presents before time to serve tea.

Just as Kate wheeled the tea table in front of me Landry came in. I thought he was a bit embarrassed when he greeted Dot, but she was perfectly self-possessed, and they soon were chatting animatedly over old times. She called him "Landry," apologizing to me as she did so; and he frankly used the diminutive by which she was known. I talked with Claire, but in spite of all my good resolutions I watched Landry closely.

He remained long enough to have a cup of tea, then excused himself.

"Measles?" Claire asked.

"Yes, measles," Landry replied.

Landry had said "measles" in response to Claire's laughing question, and I supposed he was going to see some of the children who were ill with that disease. But when he came in and I, deploring the fact that he had to leave us, asked him which family he had visited, he

surprised me by saying he had called on Louisa Lawrence.

"Did they send for you?" I asked.

"No, but as I was called to attend her, that was not necessary."

"You mean she is so sick that you needed to make the call?" I persisted.

"Really, Sybil, you must stop! I can't be questioned about my movements," he replied almost angrily.

"I suppose Louisa looks stunning in negligee," I went on. "She prides herself on her figure."

"Oh, you women!" Landry said with a dry laugh which held no mirth, "how you do love each other!"

After Landry went out I lay quietly on the couch for a few minutes; but my jealousy would not allow me to rest. So I again gave myself up to my miserable thoughts. It had been bad enough to know that Dot Chamberlain was to remain in Horning several weeks; but to think of Landry's spending his time with Louisa Lawrence was maddening.

I remembered how only a short time ago she had made some lovely bed jackets and caps. How she had tried them on, and that she was ravishing in them. Likely as not she was not ill at all; it was just a pose to fascinate Landry.

"Why can't you tell me about Louisa?" I fretted when he came in. "Are you falling in love with her, and don't want me to know it?"

He made no answer. But a hurt, pained look on his face should have warned me that I was trying him too far, that his love for me, great as he claimed it was, might not stand the strain of my constant suspicion.

Up to the time I married Landry, Louisa Lawrence had been one of my most intimate friends. Now I

scarcely saw her. I had felt that I didn't care to expose Landry to the temptation her beauty proved to most young men.

Landry once had said that he admired her, that he thought her very clever. She was bright and witty, I must acknowledge. But already I was jealous of the slightest attention, the most casual word of praise he bestowed upon any one but me. His intense virility, his broad outlook on the world of men and things, his serious nature, his handsome person, all fascinated me, and I naturally supposed they would fascinate others.

I never shall forget a conversation we had shortly before we were married. He had said:

"If you cannot trust even in the face of adverse criticism, adverse evidence; if you cannot go on trusting across walls of silence; if misunderstandings count for anything; you are not a real friend."

"You really believe that?" I had asked.

"Certainly! Don't you?"

"I am not quite sure," I had returned. "What of jealousy? You did not mention that among your tests of friendship."

"Real friendship knows no jealousy. That seems to be reserved for lovers."

"But aren't lovers, friends?" I queried.

"Sometimes!" he had replied enigmatically; and the conversation had ended.

CHAPTER V

You may think that having married a doctor I should have adapted myself to the exigencies of his profession, that I should have overcome my jealousy. I wonder if any who read my story are doctors' wives? If they are, and were married as young as was I, and loved the men they married, they at least will sympathize with me—because they know how.

I blew hot, I blew cold. One day all love and sympathy with Landry and his work; the next all jealous suspicion.

Once Landry said to me:

"I try to please you, Sybil, try to make you happy; but sometimes I feel baffled."

I wonder if calm, phlegmatic people ever realize what a nature such as mine is capable of suffering, if for a moment they can understand its contradictions. When we were first married and his sign was put under the old Doctor's, I remember telling him that it made me feel important. I was the doctor's wife.

Long since any sense of importance I may have had had left me. And I often wished with all my heart that he had chosen some other profession.

"I shall be back as soon as possible," Landry said as he returned from answering the telephone. He had come home early and we were sitting cozily together.

"That means I suppose that I am to be left alone?" I grumbled.

"No longer than I can help."

"Meaning?"

"Probably an hour or two."

"I see! I must make up my mind to be second—always."

"You married a doctor, Sybil, a man who has his way to make in the world. And I am going to make it. We will have a long life to spend together—I hope—after I have made a success of my profession. Until then my work must come first; before you, myself—anything!"

"You talk as if we were as poor as church mice!" I snapped.

"No, we're not really poor, thanks to uncle for giving us a home; but it takes all I earn to live; and I am not satisfied merely to live. I want to amount to something in my profession; and I intend to," he finished earnestly.

"I'm glad you have declared yourself so early in the game; I shall make my arrangements accordingly," and I drew myself up indignantly.

"Do so," Landry replied.

That night when he came home I was all remorse, ready to kiss and make up. But it takes two to make a bargain, and Landry was not in the kiss and make up mood.

Immediately after dinner he went out to make a call. Before he went he mumbled some sort of apology for leaving me alone; and suggested that after he came back we take a walk.

"I may as well get accustomed to staying alone," I replied.

When he came in I had gone to bed, but was not asleep, although I pretended to be.

Man-like he paid no attention, which I thought cruel.

He found a magazine and went softly downstairs to read. When he did come to bed I really was asleep.

Claire Adams had sent out invitations to a lawn party in honor of her guest. Landry had promised to go, and I, as well as the other young people of the town, was looking forward with delight to the coming affair.

Mr. Adams had an immense place and a pavilion was to be put up out on the lawn for dancing. A caterer was to come from the city and everything was to be done on a scale seldom seen in Horning.

I was having a new dress made for the occasion, and was as excited over the affair as if I instead of Claire were giving it. I hoped Landry wouldn't be too attentive to Dot Chamberlain, but hesitated to speak to him about it.

Afterward I wished I had.

The day of the lawn party dawned cloudless and delightfully cool.

"It couldn't be better if it were made to order!" I said to Landry at breakfast.

"You're right!" he replied. Then, "Don't wait for me, Sybil. I'll get home in time to dress and go with you if possible, but I may be late. I'll come as soon as I can."

"Oh, Landry!" I exclaimed, "please do go with me. We've been married so short a time that it will look queer if you don't."

I did not realize that Landry knew nothing of my strong reluctance to facing Dot Chamberlain without him; that I was in no mood to make excuses for him. Nor did he understand that I felt I should suffer a loss of dignity and self-respect if I had to do so.

"I told you I should get home if I could!" he returned, then hurried away.

He came in about 11 o'clock.

"Just have Kate give me a snack, Sybil. One of the Bellemy children died this morning, and the other is dangerously sick."

"You don't mean you can't go with me?" I asked.

"Are you totally heartless, Sybil? Mrs. Bellemy is scarcely older than you are; one baby is dead, the other perhaps dying."

"I'm sorry, of course," I returned, ashamed. "But you will get back in time, won't you?"

"Don't wait!" he answered as he flung out of the house.

I laid down a little while so that I would look fresh and rested. I knew Landry would not get back for some time. I determined to wait, even though it made me late for the party. I would not let Dot Chamberlain see me neglected. That's what I called Landry's devotion to his work—"neglect."

Finally I got up and dressed for the party. It was after two, and the invitations were for 3 o'clock. When I was dressed I was really very well satisfied with my appearance, and taking a book I sat down to wait for Landry.

The clock struck three, a quarter, then half-past. I couldn't read any longer and stood at the window watching the guests pass on their way to the party. To my surprise I saw Louisa Lawrence. She and Dora went by together. I had thought her too ill to go. I waited until about ten minutes past four, then I took my courage in both hands and started out. I met no one on the way. "I am so late every one is there before me," I thought bitterly, blaming Landry.

The band was playing; some were dancing, others playing games on the lawn when I arrived. Lloyd Mas-

ters and Graham York had come home for the affair; and all the town boys and girls were there.

"Why, where's the doctor? Isn't he coming?" Claire asked, as she in the same breath scolded me for being late.

"He will come later—that is, I think he will," I replied, as carelessly as I could. "One of the Bellemys children died this morning, and the other is very sick and they sent for him."

"Oh, isn't that dreadful; but I hope he'll be able to get here. Dot will be terribly disappointed if he doesn't show up in time to dance with her. She says she used to love to dance with him."

It was after five when Landry came. I was dancing with York and he didn't see me at first. But I watched him make his way directly to Dot after he had greeted Claire, and then saw them dancing together.

When the dancing was interrupted for refreshments, I supposed, of course, that Landry would search me out and take me in; but although I refused to let Graham escort me, Landry never came near me.

I was furious! And when Lloyd Masters came up and said laughingly: "All alone, Mrs. Doctor? Come, let's eat," I went with him thankfully.

When we reached the dining room where the collation was being served, there sat Landry and Dot Chamberlain, laughing and evidently having the time of their lives.

"The doctor seems to be enjoying himself," Lloyd said as we found seats. "He and Dot are old friends, I hear."

"Yes, he knew her when he was in college," I replied, trying to speak naturally.

"You better look out; Dot is considered dangerous."

"I'm not afraid," I boasted, feeling almost panic-stricken at his words.

I was horribly jealous—so jealous I scarcely knew what I was saying or doing. I laughed and joked hysterically. Several times I saw Landry's eyes upon me, but I pretended not to notice. We danced a little after the refreshments had been served, and he came to me and asked me if I wanted to dance with him. I told him I was engaged, and he danced again with Dot.

On the way home I scarcely spoke, and he seemed not to notice. When I had taken my things off, he said:

"The other Bellemy baby died, too."

"I wish I was dead!" I snapped. "You have done nothing but make love to Dot Chamberlain all the afternoon; if you were going to insult me why didn't you tell me and I would have stayed at home."

"Why, Sybil, you were having such a good time with York and Masters I hated to butt in. As for making love to——"

"Don't deny it!" I exploded, then I lost all control of myself and we had our first quarrel—first real one, I mean. Landry tried to pacify me for a time; then he, too, said things that hurt—things that are not easily forgotten.

That night I slept in the guest room. It was the first time since we had been married that I had not slept in his arms; the only time we had not kissed each other good night.

The next morning when we met at the breakfast table we both tried to appear natural. Landry looked worn and I was sure had passed a sleepless night. I, for the first time in my life had resorted to the rouge pot before breakfast, hoping he would not notice how ghastly I looked.

I think men forget that women are of a more nervous organization, finer emotions than themselves. That a woman's entire life, physical and mental, must be adjusted to meet new requirements. I had said many unkind, unjust things in the heat of my jealous passion, and yet in the calm light of day I could not feel that I had been wholly to blame.

In fact, most of the errors of my married life were made from having a mistaken viewpoint, or rather, perhaps, failing to take Landry's viewpoint into account.

"Landry," I said, as he finished his coffee, "don't you think you should beg my pardon for the things you said to me last night?"

"Certainly, if you wish," he answered coldly. "But the next time you urge me to leave my work to please you, remember the way you acted yesterday, and don't be surprised if I refuse."

"But you had no right to neglect me and show her so much attention."

"For heaven's sake, Sybil, are you still harping on that? If you only knew how the whole thing bored me. How guilty I felt to be there when there is so much sickness; so many who need my time, you'd at least have the grace to be quiet."

I said no more, and he flung out of the house.

I sat for a long time thinking over what he had said; wondering if he meant it. If Dot bored him; if he had been anxious to get away from her? Then I fell to wondering about Louisa Lawrence. She had watched Landry nearly as closely as I had; and once or twice I had surprised a peculiar expression on her face as he and Dot laughed together.

Fortunately for my peace of mind, Graham York just

then called me up and asked me to have a game of tennis with him. So I had no more time to think of my own affairs until afternoon.

I was unhappy, dissatisfied with myself; angry with Landry, and altogether miserable. We had been married only three months and yet we had quarreled violently. Was Landry tiring of me already? Or was it that I had been unreasonable? I could not then feel that I had been; yet I wanted to make up. I hadn't slept a wink all the night of my self-imposed loneliness. I *hated* that guest room! I never wanted to sleep there again.

How I wished Landry had chosen some other profession. If he had been a banker, or a merchant he wouldn't have been brought constantly in contact with pretty women gotten up in fascinating negligee and frilly caps. If he had been a lawyer or an engineer like Lloyd or Graham, he would not have been subjected to such temptations. Of course I never could have married anyone but Landry; but if only he hadn't been a doctor. I could endure being called Mrs. Jones now without a shiver, but I never would get used to his profession. Once I heard Claire Adams say:

"If it wasn't for the women the doctors would starve to death," and I had not forgotten it.

Some day I would ask Landry if it were so. But not while we were cross with each other.

When Landry came home to dinner I met him on the porch. I had put on a dress he had greatly admired; and I held up my face for his kiss. He kissed me, but with no particular feeling, and asked rather sharply:

"Is dinner ready? I wish you'd hurry it. I have to go out immediately!"

I wanted to ask where, but wouldn't risk annoying

him; although my eyes filled at his cold reception of my little attempt to make up our quarrel.

He ate his dinner almost in silence. I asked him one or two questions which he answered, but he made no effort to carry on a conversation. As soon as he had finished he left, saying:

"I may be late. Don't sit up."

At first I thought I would call up one of the girls and ask her to spend the evening with me. Then I considered going out somewhere; over to see mother. Finally I concluded to read. So I made myself comfortable, found a new magazine Landry had left on the hall rack, and settled myself for the evening.

About nine o'clock the telephone rang. I jumped up, thinking it might be Landry. It was Dora Lawrence.

"Is the doctor at home, Sybil?" she asked, and I noticed that her voice trembled.

"No, he's not in just now, who's sick, Dora?"

"Oh—Louisa—isn't very well." Then anxiously: "When do you expect him?"

"He said he'd be late," I replied coldly. I did not like the way she hesitated when she said Louisa wasn't well.

What in the world ailed Louisa Lawrence again? She seemed all right at the party. I hoped now that Landry *would* stay out. I would rather he were with another patient than with Louisa.

About ten-thirty the phone rang again. This time it *was* Landry.

"I shall be very late, Sybil, perhaps may not get home at all. I thought I'd let you know so you would go to bed."

"But Landry," I commenced, just as I heard the click of the receiver as he hung up.

There was nothing I could do. I hadn't the slightest idea where he had telephoned from, though I rang central and asked her. I waited until twelve o'clock, then as he did not come I went to bed and fell immediately asleep.

It was broad daylight when I woke up. Landry had not come in. While I lay speculating as to where he was I heard him call to Kate:

"Get breakfast as soon as you can! I'll be down in fifteen minutes!" then without coming in to me—he said afterward he thought I was asleep and he didn't want to disturb me—he went into the bathroom, and in a moment or two I heard him splashing in the tub.

I hurriedly dressed; and when he came out I was ready for breakfast. I waited until Kate had left the room before I asked:

"Who was so sick that you had to stay out all night?"

Landry pretended not to hear the question. I know it was pretense by the look on his face. So I asked again:

"Whom did you stay all night with?"

"Louisa Lawrence was very ill," he replied, in a tone which discouraged further questioning. But I was not to be put off.

"What's the matter with Louisa, Landry? Dora phoned about nine o'clock that Louisa was sick; but she talked so queerly; as if there were some secret about her illness."

Landry went right on reading.

"Landry!" I broke out, enraged at his silence, "didn't you hear me?"

"Yes, Sybil, I heard."

"Then why don't you answer?"

"Because I have told you many times not to question me."

"Aren't you going to tell me what's the matter with Louisa?"

“No.”

“Why? Is it something disgraceful; or are you in love with her and know she pretends so that you can come to her?”

There was no reply.

"Landry! won't you please tell me?" I said, changing my tactics.

"No, Sybil! I shall tell you nothing. I remember once saying to you that a physician's secrets were, or should be, kept as inviolate as a priest's. Evidently you have forgotten."

I said no more. What was there to say? But I determined in some way I would fathom the mystery—as I had come to call it—of Louisa Lawrence's illness.

About ten o'clock I went over to see Dora. She acted embarrassed when I asked her how Louisa was; and how she found Landry last night!

"Louisa is better," she said coldly, "and I caught the doctor at the office. I telephoned there and old Doctor Jones said he expected him and would send him over."

"But is Louisa dangerously sick?" I persisted.

"No, not now. She had a bad spell—with—her heart," she stammered, increasing my suspicions by her manner.

I went straight from there over to Claire's. I hadn't made my party call, and I knew that if any one had an idea what ailed Louisa, it would be Claire; and I was determined to find out.

Had Louisa Lawrence been old, or plain, I should not have felt enough interest to do as I did; but she was

young, only a year older than I, and one of the prettiest girls I had ever seen.

I found Claire and Dot sitting on the porch. They seemed glad to see me, and after chatting a while, I said:

"Do you know what ails Louisa Lawrence, Claire? Every little while she's sick. Of course, I can't ask Landry, professional ethics, you know, and all that, but I confess I'm awfully curious."

"All I know is that Dora told me her heart was weak," Claire replied; when Dot broke in.

"Doesn't Landry tell you about his patients? I'd be so cross and jealous if I were married to a doctor and he didn't tell me every single thing, especially about so lovely a patient as Miss Lawrence. I've just raved about her ever since I met her at the party. She seemed well enough then."

"She was sick enough to keep Landry up all night last night!" I foolishly returned.

"All night!" she ejaculated; "my, I'm glad I didn't marry Landry!" Then she blushed crimson.

So Landry had asked Dot Chamberlain to marry him had he? He might have told me they were intimate enough for that, when I had questioned him. I began to think that a man's wife knows less of him than the veriest outsider.

When I rose to go after chatting a little longer, Claire said:

"Do tell me, Sybil, if you find out what is the matter with Louisa, won't you?"

I promised, but with no thought of being able to satisfy my own and her curiosity.

CHAPTER VI

THE next evening Landry and I were sitting cozily in the library and I told him I had asked Dwight to dinner.

"I hope he'll forget he's a parson for a little while. Not that I object to a man's being good; but I do object to his parading his goodness. That's what Dwight used to do."

"Oh, but he has changed so in the last few months. I used to think he was in love with Louisa Lawrence; but since she's been sick so much I haven't seen them together as often," I replied, closely watching Landry when I mentioned Louisa.

"A clergyman is like a doctor—he needs a wife," Landry remarked dryly.

"Is that the only reason you asked me to marry you, Landry; because you needed a wife in your profession?"

"You know better, Sybil. Yet it is a very sure thing that people trust a married physician, when they hesitate to employ a single man. I think it is a good deal the same with a clergyman. His parishioners feel more like confiding in him if he is married."

"Very complimentary to the girls they marry," I returned, then hastily I said, fearing Landry would think I wanted to quarrel again: "But I don't care what your motive was; I'd marry you in spite of it." And I laughed, but I meant it all the same, and he knew it.

Suddenly Landry jumped up with an impatient ejaculation.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"I've almost forgotten a call I have to make. I got interested in a story and the time slipped by more quickly than I realized." Before I could ask a question he was gone.

For an hour I continued reading. Then, grown tired, I commenced to wonder where Landry had gone. Who was ill that he was staying so long? He had spoken of only one call.

Suddenly I thought of Louisa Lawrence. Was she ill again—or pretending to be ill, and was Landry with her? Once this thought had taken possession of me, it would not down, but obtruded itself between the lines of the story I was trying to read.

The clock struck ten, then the half hour, then again it struck; and I counted eleven. I moved uneasily, then got up and looked out of the window. It was a clear night and I could see the street plainly. Two or three pedestrians passed, but no one who looked a bit like Landry.

Then as once again the half hour struck in a nearby church clock, a thought came to me; and so persistently remained that no reasoning of mine could banish it from my mind.

Landry was with Louisa Lawrence! It was almost as though some one had told me so; some one that knew. I turned the electric switch which governed the light in the library, and drew a chair to the window. I leaned forward in my seat, resting my elbows on the window sill, my chin in my cupped hands; and gazed through the window into the pale street.

I was trembling with the agony of my thoughts. I feared to analyze them beyond a certain point. My imagination ran rioting along the pathway of our married life—Landry and me! Me and Landry. I was

alone. It was dark and lonely. I was afraid—of what I did not know. I only felt that danger threatened me—my happiness, my very life.

I suppose that every one must take what God gives him or her with his or her nature—must pay the price that is asked for having a particular kind of a soul. If I am impelled from within to do certain things, perform certain acts, I must take the results, no matter what they are, which go with my daring.

I realized that there are things in the lives of all men which cannot be told—at least are not. Things which are made possible by the fact that he is a man. And I resented the idea keenly. My girlhood was still upon me with all its dreams, its ideals, its longings. I never had lived. Had I, the mistakes which I made would never have been made; the unhappiness I brought upon myself and others might have been avoided.

I was afraid of fate, I shied at responsibility. I wanted all of life that belonged to me; without effort or sacrifice, I wanted it because I considered it my right, not because of any helpfulness on my part.

The clock struck twelve. Still Landry had not come. Why didn't he telephone? No matter how sick a patient might be, wasn't I his wife; and as such entitled to some consideration?

I walked the floor. I wrung my hands together. I became almost hysterical. When a woman thus gives vent to her feelings it is apt to end in that way.

When one o'clock struck I could endure it no longer.

"He is with Louisa Lawrence!" I vehemently declared aloud, as I walked back and forth; occasionally peering through the window as a step sounded on the sidewalk.

Twice I went to the telephone, and twice I returned,

undecided—should I call or should I wait and question Landry? The third time I called Mr. Lawrence's number.

I stood in nervous, trembling anxiety until I heard a sleepy voice ask:

"Hello! what is it?"

"Is Doctor Jones there?"

"No, who is it?"

Without replying I hung up the receiver. At least Louisa needn't know I had thought Landry with her, and, because of it, was jealous.

"Whom in the world are you telephoning this time of night?" Landry asked. I had not heard him come in. And, after I had caught one look at his set, stern face, I hesitated to answer.

"Why—I—was—trying to find you," I stammered in response to his demand to know to whom I was telephoning.

"Find me? What did you want?" he queried, still scowling.

"Oh, I was lonesome," I lamely replied.

"Whom were you telephoning?" he asked again, very sternly.

"The Lawrences'."

"Why there? I said nothing about going there."

"Well, Louisa is sick so much lately, and you know you stayed all night last week, that I thought you might be there again," I said hastily, trying to justify myself.

"Had you known I was with Mike O'Dowd's little girl would you have called me?"

"Why, no," I acknowledged, caught unawares.

"Then it wasn't the fact that you were lonely, nor that I was obliged to be out. It was your miserable

jealousy again. Once for all I forbid you to telephone me when I am out on my calls. I will not have my practice ruined, myself belittled by your causeless, unreasoning jealousy," and he rushed out of the room and upstairs to bed.

I slept not at all that night. I was chagrined that Landry had caught me. Had he not come in just as he did, he never would have known that I had tried to find him. But even though he had not been with Louisa, I considered his anger arose, not from the fact that I had telephoned him, but the fact that I had telephoned her home.

I would question Dwight as to the cause of Louisa's illness; then I should know if it were necessary for Landry to visit her. My ministerial brother-in-law was so simple and unsuspecting that I felt positive if he knew anything about it, I would be able to get it out of him with very little trouble.

I went over to mother's right after breakfast, and fortunately found Dwight in his study. He had lived with father and mother ever since Felice died.

"Are you awfully busy this morning, Dwight?" I asked.

"No, not particularly. Why?"

"Oh, I wanted to take a long walk, and I hate walking alone. I thought I might induce you to go with me."

"Do go, Dwight," mother said. She had followed me into the study. "It will do you good."

"All right, Sybil, I'll come in a minute."

While waiting, mother and I chatted about impersonal things. She asked about Landry, bemoaning the fact that there was so much sickness.

"Mike O'Dowd told me when we went past this morning that his baby was very sick," she said.

"Yes, Landry was with him half the night," I answered peevishly.

"Sybil, my dear, be very careful that you don't find fault with Landry—unnecessary fault. I fear he is the type which nagging and faultfinding would drive away from home. Doctors have many temptations men in other professions know nothing about," she finished just as Dwight came out. Mother bade us a gay farewell, never dreaming she had added to my suspicions by her last few words.

I said nothing to Dwight about Louisa until we had been walking a full half hour. I chatted about Claire Adams, Dot Chamberlain and my own affairs. Finally I asked:

"Do you know what ails Louisa Lawrence, Dwight? She seems to be sick so often lately. I know you are great friends," I added as I noticed a peculiar look cross his face.

"No—Sybil—I don't know; that is, I am not sure," he replied, falling at once into my trap.

"But what do you think it is? Landry had to stay all night with her——"

"What! Last night?" he asked, undoubted concern in his tones.

"No, not last night; last week," I answered.

I was watching Dwight closely, and so caught the look of relief which crossed his face.

"Oh, I thought you meant again," he returned, his answer showing that he was conversant with the fact of Landry's visit before I had mentioned it.

"Are you in love with Louisa, Dwight? I sha'n't

feel hurt because of Felice," I assured him as he hesitated.

"Miss Lawrence is a very charming girl," he said politely.

"Indeed she is, and so lovely. But, Dwight, do find out what is the matter with her!—for both our sakes," I added enigmatically.

Dwight stood still and looked at me as I asked him to find out what ailed Louisa Lawrence.

"What do you mean, Sybil?" he asked. "I don't understand. You say 'for both our sakes.' What have you to do with it? What is it to you?"

"Why—I—why—you know—Landry," I stammered, when he interrupted me so fiercely that had I not been looking at him I could not have believed it my meek brother-in-law.

"Landry! What's he got to do with it?"

"He's—why, he's her physician, you know."

"Yes, but that's not what you meant; out with it, Sybil. What are you driving at?"

I was a bit frightened at the effect my questions had produced upon Dwight. I did not care to confide too freely in him, yet I was determined to find out all he knew if possible.

"I am anxious about Louisa. And no one seems to understand what ails her," I parried.

"I believe they call it a heart affection," he replied, "but you have not yet explained what you meant by your remark 'for both our sakes.'"

"I don't want Landry staying all night with any patient," I exploded, not knowing what else to say, "and particularly with as pretty a girl as Louisa Lawrence. He is too impressionable, and for that matter, so is she."

"Don't you think we better turn back now, it is getting late," Dwight said, looking at his watch and entirely ignoring my outburst.

I had humiliated myself for nothing. I saw at a glance that I could get nothing more out of Dwight just then; but I saw, too, that what I had said had struck home. A dull red had crept slowly into his face and remained there. I had made Dwight feel jealous of Landry.

So, while feeling ashamed of it, I had crossed the Rubicon and plunged myself and Dwight headlong into trouble without sensing that there was another and a better way, by which I might have accomplished much more—the way of love, love for Landry.

After I left Dwight, I felt chagrined, angry at myself for making him a sharer of my secret. For a few moments I was desperately unhappy and ashamed over what I had done. Then I forgot all about Louisa, Dwight, everything, in a new cause for worry which presented itself, rather re-presented itself.

Once more it was Dot Chamberlain.

I had not forgotten the remark she once made which told me that Landry had been more attentive to her than he had acknowledged. And when I met Claire and Dot just at my gate something Claire said recalled it to my mind.

I invited the girls in, and ordered Kate to serve tea. We chatted and laughed, and then something was said about Landry.

"You were lucky to get him," Claire remarked.

"Perhaps he was lucky to get me," I responded, wondering what was coming.

"Oh, that goes without saying, of course," she replied, "but I was thinking you were lucky to meet him

when you did. If you hadn't, I think Dot would have been Mrs. Doctor Jones instead of you."

"Really!" was all I could say, so angry was I.

"Now that isn't fair, Claire; you have embarrassed both Sybil and me, just because Landry thought he was in love with me a long time ago, and imagined we were made for each other, you shouldn't tell it after he is happily married to some one else." Then she turned to me, "It's a good thing you're not a jealous sort of person, Sybil."

At that very minute I was wild with jealousy. So Landry had cared enough for Dot to ask her to marry him; and—he never had told me. When I had accused him of knowing her very well, he had replied that he only knew her as he had known other girls. He should explain himself that very night.

I flattered myself that neither of the girls knew of the tempest they had raised. I walked to the gate with them, and promised to see them the next day. Then I returned to the house to wait for Landry.

"Landry," I said, as soon as he came in, "I don't care whether you get angry or not, but I want to know what is the matter with Louisa Lawrence! Dwight knows, I am sure, so you needn't be so secretive."

"Dwight is her pastor," he returned coldly.

"And in love with her," I added.

Landry flashed a quick look at me.

"Do you think so?" he asked.

"No, I don't think; I am sure."

I thought I heard him mutter "poor fellow," but wasn't sure, and nothing I could say would make him talk any more. I became very angry and said sarcastically:

"I guess Claire tells the truth about doctors. I was afraid it would be so. But, like a fool, I thought you would be different, although goodness knows why."

Landry showed not the slightest interest in what Claire might have said. And I knew by his look of annoyance that he would not question me. So I blundered on:

"She said that doctors would starve to death if it weren't for the women, most of whom pretend to be sick so that they can consult some good-looking physician."

"Thank you for the implied compliment; but Claire doesn't know what she is talking about. Women aren't so anxious to waste their husband's money. Occasionally a foolish, hysterical woman will imagine an ailment, but they are very rare," and this was all I could get out of Landry.

Later in the evening Landry said:

"Sybil, we shall have to live more economically. I need new books, new instruments. Uncle's office equipment is sadly inadequate; then, too, I have a scheme in mind for establishing a small emergency hospital where minor injuries and surgical cases could be attended to right here without patients incurring the expense of going to the city. But these things take money; and we live up to every cent I make."

"I thought your practice was increasing."

"It has, very appreciably. But as it is principally either among the poor, or those who do not pay promptly, I have been unable to collect more than we have used to live upon."

"That's another thing about a doctor!" I sputtered; "I don't see why you can't collect your bills just as the butcher and grocer do theirs. It's only because so many of them aren't necessary, as Claire said."

"I feel anxious about uncle," Landry returned, pay-

ing no attention. "He is unable to leave the house again. I wish you would go over and see him to-morrow."

"If anything happens to him, you'll have all his money, won't you?" I inquired. "I'll go over in the morning."

"I hope it will be a long while before I get anything from the old man," Landry returned. "Already he has done more than I had any right to expect. What we should have done without the house I don't know."

As Landry's practice had grown, his absorption in it became intense. I often felt that he gave it all his thoughts; and I knew he gave it all his time. So, in a way, Landry and I lived in different worlds. Landry, of course, did not talk of his patients to me; and I in turn told him very little of how I spent my time—unless it was some large social affair. I was not only jealous of Landry, but I was jealous of his profession. Why shouldn't I be? It took him constantly from me.

If Landry hadn't been so engrossed in his own affairs he would have realized that I was beginning to be unhappy because of this jealousy, though we had been married not quite four months. I was proud, and successfully hid my feelings from mother and my intimate friends. But Dwight, I knew, understood more than I wished him to. That was my fault; that I had let him see how I felt about Louisa did not make me any happier. I almost hated to go home for fear I should see him, and took to planning my visits when I knew he was out. But all the time my jealousy grew—jealousy of my handsome, clever, popular husband; and intense jealousy of his profession.

Sometimes I would clench my hands and say aloud:

"You said you'd never marry a doctor! Why did

you do it?" I felt that Landry was neglecting me. Well, if he didn't change, I'd show him that others admired me; were glad to be with me even though he was not.

CHAPTER VII

THE next morning I went over to see Landry's uncle. He was propped up in bed, but I could see that he was very ill. He breathed with difficulty and could not talk above a whisper. I really liked the old man and sat with him a long time.

For days afterward I saw very little of Landry. Every moment he had he spent with his uncle. I fretted about it; but as Landry would be his heir, I said nothing. He was really fond of his uncle and was very quiet and sad when he did come home.

"There's the telephone," I said sleepily to Landry.

He jumped out of bed, and I heard quick tones, tense with an unusual excitement. In a moment he was back fairly throwing on his clothes.

"It's uncle! the nurse thinks he's dying," and he was gone almost before I had grasped his words.

It was four o'clock, that hour just between daylight and dawn. I had heard that vitality was then at a low ebb. I wondered if I ought to get up and go over, too. Finally I rose, dressed quickly and called Kate.

"Have some breakfast ready in about half an hour. The doctor's uncle is very sick and I'm going over there. I'll be back by the time it is ready."

The door was unlatched and I walked right in. Landry heard and came out to me.

"It's all over, Sybil. Uncle's gone," and his voice trembled.

Old Doctor Jones was Landry's nearest relative. I could not help wondering how much money he had left. He was supposed to be quite wealthy.

It was not that I cared so much for the money, as that now Landry would have no excuse to leave me. I never took into account his love of his profession; his ambition. As usual, I only looked at it from one angle—my own desires.

Two days afterward the old doctor was laid away. The next day we assembled in the old-fashioned parlor to hear the will read, the housekeeper, Landry and I.

The old lawyer, uncle's friend for years, cleared his throat and wiped his spectacles before he began. He was almost as old as his client, and for years they had been intimate.

"I am afraid that you will be disappointed," he said, as he looked at Landry. "I am sure you will be surprised. I was. Your uncle died insolvent. I question if there will be enough to pay what little he owes. Against my judgment and advice he invested some money in mining properties. I never knew until now how much. They are absolutely worthless; and he put every cent of his life's savings into them."

I was stunned. So all my dreams of having Landry more to myself; of the easy life he could live because of the legacy coming to him were shattered. I did not care so much for the money. I never was particularly mercenary. It was Landry I wanted, his time, his thoughts, his attention.

On the way home Landry was very quiet. Finally he said:

"I am glad Mary (his uncle's housekeeper) will be able to keep the home."

"But aren't you awfully disappointed, Landry?" I

asked, as we reached the house, where father and mother were waiting to hear the news.

"I'm sorry uncle was so foolish as to invest in fake schemes, but I never have banked on his money, Sybil. He gave us a home for which we should be very grateful. He helped me through college after father married again. I loved the old man. I have no feeling of blame for him in my heart, no thought of censure. He made his way in the world; why shouldn't I make mine? I am far better equipped than he was at my age."

I listened, but to me Landry's sophistry carried no conviction. His quixotic ideas found no response in my heart. I was disappointed, almost ill from the knowledge that instead of a fortune, the old doctor had left us nothing.

The idea that Landry didn't resent it filled me with wonder. That his fondness for the old man made him blind to material advantages, I could not understand.

Landry soon showed me very plainly that he was hurt whenever I mentioned his uncle's failure to leave us any money. I had explained to him that it was because it would have enabled him to spend more of his time with me; and his reply had been:

"If Uncle Edwin had left me anything, Sybil, I should have used it to found a memorial hospital for him. As far as money making a difference in the time I have at my disposal, disabuse your mind of that idea at once. I intend to succeed in my profession, as I have told you before. To do so I must devote myself, my energies to that, and that only."

"It's too bad that Dot Chamberlain didn't marry you when you asked her. She might have been able to keep you with her, even if you won't stay with me," I snapped.

"Who told you I asked her to marry me?" Landry queried.

"She and Claire," I returned. "Of course, you wouldn't tell me."

"I would tell you many things if I could, but your insane and foolish jealousy makes it impossible. I hate scenes. You seem unable to avoid making them. The consequence is that often I would tell you of my affairs, but your attitude deters me," and he took up a book and pretended to read.

"You mean that if you thought I wouldn't be jealous you would tell me about Dot, and Louisa, and all your young women patients?" I asked excitedly.

"No. I never shall tell you about my patients, regardless of the attitude you take toward me. About such things as my acquaintance with Dot, or any one outside my profession, that's another thing altogether."

For days I thought of little else but the knowledge so emphatically impressed upon me that Landry never would make me his confidante in the way I wished. I constantly puzzled over the situation. Then, worn out with worry and thinking, I decided to try and forget it. In the meantime I would have as good a time as I could, regardless of Landry.

Claire was to give a strawride for Dot, who was going home the end of the week. Of course, she had invited Landry and me, and Landry had unequivocally refused to go.

"But why, Landry?" I asked, so disappointed I could scarcely keep the tears back.

"Principally because I haven't the time, but also because I do not care to go."

"Even if you don't, you might go for my sake!" I stormed. "I want to go if you do not!"

"There's nothing to prevent your going."

"What will every one say if I go without you? They'll probably think you were afraid to go because Dot Chamberlain is going. Every one knows you are in love with each other," I said recklessly.

"Every one is a very wise lady—or gentleman," Landry replied. But he grew white, and the scowl he always wore when angry, appeared on his forehead.

"Don't be a kill-joy! If you won't go with me when I want to, please don't object if I enjoy myself. I'll find some one who will act as my escort."

"So you have threatened before," Landry returned, then the telephone rang and interrupted our conversation.

When I told Claire that Landry wouldn't go—I said "couldn't," though I didn't believe him—she was awfully annoyed.

"I have just an even number. What shall I do?" she grumbled.

"I'll stay at home, too, Claire, then it will make no difference."

"Indeed you won't; the party wouldn't be complete without you; and we are going to have a perfect time. Every one but Landry has accepted, and the paper says we are going to have nice weather, and oh, I must think of some one to take Landry's place. I do wish there were more young men in this town. Nice ones, I mean."

"Have you asked that nephew of old Mr. Carleton's, he seems rather nice. He certainly is good looking."

"No, I haven't even met him! What's his name?"

"Homer, I believe, Homer Carleton. His uncle introduced him to me in the street one day last week."

"Well, I'll get acquainted some way and ask him. You must come, Sybil."

In some way Claire managed to meet Homer Carleton, and he accepted her invitation. Dot had pouted when she found that Landry was not to be with them—so Claire had said—and the knowledge did not add to my happiness.

I really did not understand Landry at times. My mind was of the sort that seeks simple solutions. Like most women I was guided to a great extent by emotions, intuitions, instincts—I “felt things.” So now I “felt” that Landry had some ulterior motive in not accompanying us. That was strengthened when I heard that Louisa Lawrence was not going. Dora would be with us, but Louisa had declined.

I can’t explain just why I thought Landry in love with both Dot and Louisa. But I was so young, so intensely jealous of him, that it did not seem at all strange to me.

I realized that no man I ever had met could be charming in more ways than could Landry when he bestirred himself. He had an unerring instinct for taking the right course, saying the right thing, which amounted to absolute artistry. He had a great deal of social tact, which long afterward I understood had been a factor in his profession. Yet at this time he begrudged the hours given to social affairs, his invariable excuse being that he had his way to make.

The night of the strawride we all met at Claire’s. She asked us to be there early so that we might become acquainted with Homer Carleton. He rather fascinated me from the first. His manners I thought perfect; although an older person might have thought him a bit forward.

“You are to take charge of Mrs. Jones, Mr. Carleton,” Claire said to him just before the big wagon drew up

to the door. "The doctor couldn't come so you are to take his place."

"I will do my best to fill it," he replied, with a peculiar glance at me.

Homer Carleton immediately made me feel at ease with him. He had rather a dominating air, yet it was tinged with a respect and devotion which made it seem the most natural thing in the world. He was older than the rest of us, older than Landry. I should have guessed him thirty. I found afterward he was thirty-three.

Probably every female ever born likes to be dominated by some man. Every woman wants love—the expression of it. She also craves admiration. Now Landry was strong enough, and all that. But his mind was so occupied with his patients, his ambition was so boundless, that he had little time to either dominate, or to show his love for me in words. And I imagined he had forgotten that he ever really admired me. So the devotion, the admiration—so freely expressed—of this man flattered and pleased me.

"I am so sorry Louisa couldn't come," one of the girls said to Dora. "She never goes anywhere nowadays, and she used to be the life of every party we had."

"She was sorry not to come," Dora answered, a note of embarrassment in her voice; "but Doctor Jones was with her when I left. She was feeling quite badly."

So that was the reason Landry wouldn't come with me. He was going to spend the evening with Louisa Lawrence. From that moment I cast all reserve to the winds. He could do as he pleased, so would I. We had been married only a few months and he preferred to sit with Louisa to being with me. Well, let him! Homer Carleton was a charming man; I would have a good time in spite of Landry's defection.

At supper no one was gayer, more full of life than was I.

"You're not a bit like an old married woman," Ruth Camp teased.

"I may be married, but I'm not old!" I flashed back.

"Young, and charming," Homer Carleton, who sat next to me, whispered.

After the supper we danced for an hour, then started for home. I am sure that Homer Carleton meant nothing wrong when he held my hand under the robe for a few moments just before we reached the house. And I am positive that I did not. But a man's conscience—and a woman's also—is gullible. I wouldn't have done anything really wrong to save my life. But that Homer was poaching on Landry's preserves, troubled me not at all. Landry should have gone with me.

My house was the first one reached on the way back, so I was the first to be dropped. Homer Carleton insisted upon getting out also.

As the rest drove off, shouting their good nights, I wondered that Landry, who surely must hear them, didn't come out. But he did not, and I said good night to Homer Carleton on the porch after giving him permission to call. I salved my conscience, however, for the long hand-clasp, by saying:

"I want you to meet the doctor."

"I shall be glad to," he replied gravely; yet I had an idea that he didn't mean it; that he would prefer not to know Landry.

"You should have gone, Landry!" I called as I climbed the stairs, "we had a lovely time."

I received no answer. When I reached our room, the bed was untouched. Landry had not yet come in. I glanced at the clock. Quarter of two.

I was filled with a woman's unreasoning wrath. That I also had been out mitigated Landry's absence not at all. I knew that he was with Louisa Lawrence. I could scarcely wait until he came in to ask him. He would tell me nothing about her; but he would not deny being with her.

I was nearly undressed when he came in. I saw the worn look on his face, and at another time it might have acted as a deterrent. But tonight it only irritated me the more.

"Where in the world have you been so late?" I snapped.

"Did you have a good time?" Landry returned, ignoring my question.

"Of course I did! so would you if you had gone."

"Did you have supper?"

"Yes, why?"

"Oh, I feel rather hungry and thought perhaps you might want a bite, too."

"But you haven't answered my question," I reminded.

"What question?"

"I asked you where you had been all this time?"

"Making calls, and attending to patients. Now, Sybil, my work is hard enough; and I am tired enough to want a little peace when I come home. I'm going down and see what Kate has in the ice box. Won't you come along?"

"No, thank you! I'm not hungry."

"Come to keep me company then," Landry smiled lovingly at me.

I meekly followed him downstairs. I couldn't resist that smile. In a few minutes I was chatting away, telling him all about the ride.

"Whom did you get in my place?" he asked.

"Homer Carleton; do you know him?"

"No, I've heard of him. He is a much older fellow than the others in that crowd, isn't he?"

"About thirty, I guess," I answered as nonchalantly as possible, "and really very charming. I asked him to call."

"All right, but if he's the fellow I have in mind, he's a good deal of a sport. Has loads of money and uses it principally to have a good time."

"Why shouldn't he? If we had money that's just what we'd do."

"No, Sybil, we wouldn't! I have some ideas which if I only had money I could put into effect at once. But I've a hard row to hoe, dear, before I arrive at the point where I can manage to even make a start. And, dear, you can help me if you will."

"How help you? I don't understand."

"It may sound strange to you, dear. But if you will trust me, and be as economical as you can it will be the greatest help you can give me. I shall have to have money to do things with. As I told you, Uncle Edwin's equipment is terribly inadequate for these days. It will take money to buy up-to-date instruments and other necessary equipment. Then I must have an office boy. When uncle was alive he, as you know, kept track of the calls. I have missed several lately. And it makes a bad impression."

"How much will an office boy cost?" I asked.

"I can get one that will do for the present for twenty-five dollars a month. One of Mike O'Dowd's boys. He's sharp as a steel trap and I think will get along all right."

"Well, that isn't much," I mused.

"It is a good deal when one hasn't it," he replied.

"Now for the other thing. Don't you trust me, Sybil?"

"Why—yes," I stammered, startled by the bluntness of his question.

"Then prove it. You act as if you didn't believe anything I told you; that you thought I constantly deceived you. It is very hard to bear, dear, especially when it is totally undeserved. And——"

"If I don't trust you it is your own fault!" I interrupted. "You never tell me anything! You stay for hours with Louisa Lawrence and won't answer a single question about her, and——"

"Never shall," he finished. "I thought you understood that."

"I may understand, but I never shall be happy so long as you refuse to answer my questions."

Landry made no answer and we went to bed in silence.

To my doubting mind and heart came disturbing thoughts as to Landry's reasons for never telling me anything. No matter how many times he had told me it was unprofessional, against all the ethics of the medical profession, I still argued that I was his wife; and, because of that, was entitled to know all about his business—his patients.

"Here's a box just came for you, ma'am," Kate said, as she handed me a long white box.

I opened it, and on a nest of green ferns reposed the loveliest roses. White, pale pink, and a deeper blush, arranged in rows. I picked up the enclosed card and held it in my hand and kept reading the scribbled words over and over: "In remembrance of our first meeting. H. C."

They were the first flowers anyone save Landry had sent me since my marriage. And of late Landry had seemed to forget to buy them for me. Here was an ad-

venture indeed! My whilom escort evidently had not forgotten me. A thrill of excitement shot through me; and yet I was conscious, too, of a vague feeling of disquiet.

But the flowers were so fragrant; they looked so innocent and cheery in their bed of ferns, that I put away all thoughts save those of pride and delight. Pride that I had been remembered, delight in my beautiful roses.

I arranged them in vases, and called Kate to admire. Then the thought came that perhaps he intended to call that afternoon; and had sent the flowers as a forerunner. I was right. It wasn't long before Kate announced "Mr. Carleton," and I hurried down to greet my visitor, delighted that I had made myself attractive in time.

Mr. Carleton was perfectly groomed, and looked very handsome. He was in fact altogether too good-looking to be expected to be unconscious of the fact. His hair was very thick and black. He wore it brushed straight back from his forehead. His eyes were deep set with long lashes. In color they matched his hair. His nose was almost perfect; and he had a good mouth with dazzling white teeth. He wore a mustache which was clipped to a fashionable smallness. He had rather a square chin, showing determination and will power. He was tall, well developed; and his clothes were absolutely correct.

I had always thought Landry about the handsomest man I had ever seen; but I realized that he would be unnoticed—by women—if Homer Carleton were around. I had not paid much attention to his looks the night of the ride, although I realized he was very handsome. But I was too angry with Landry; too sore at heart at his

refusal to accompany me, to much care about what my escort looked like.

I greeted him rather gushingly I am afraid, and thanked him for the flowers. From the moment he spoke to me the vague feeling of disquiet I had experienced when I received his roses, returned to me. Yet there was absolutely nothing in his speech or manner I could object to as being in the least disrespectful. Also I thought that any woman would feel that he was dangerous, if only because of his good looks. But neither would she send him away. What woman ever preferred safety to the thrill of an unknown, untried danger?—what young woman?

“I am sorry the doctor isn’t at home,” I said primly, hurrying to make conversation. He had held my hand so long I was embarrassed.

“I’m not!” he laughed. “You see I am honest.”

“Are you?” the question came involuntarily.

“If I have to be,” he parried.

I felt we were on dangerous ground. He was taking things too much for granted. But I could correct the impression later.

My reckless mood urged me on. I laughed and chatted, saying many things I should have hesitated to say to any other man I had ever met. But Homer Carleton had hypnotized me in a manner. He showed plainly that he admired me; liked to be with me. And just then that was balm for my heart. But after he left, the disquiet again returned; almost crowding out the pleasure of the afternoon—almost.

CHAPTER VIII

DOT CHAMBERLAIN had gone home. Our little crowd had settled down into its old ways. That is, all but myself. I was uneasy, restless. Landry seemed not to understand me at all. Sometimes he would take me into his arms and ask what had happened that I was so changed.

"It is only November, little girl, and we were married in June; yet I don't seem to understand you any more. You love me, don't you?"

"Of course I love you, you silly!" and I'd cuddle closer to him, happy in his caresses. But most of the time he was so busy, I saw so little of him that I was thrown back upon myself altogether too much for my own good or—his happiness.

I was still at an age, though married, when a girl has her own ideas of what constitutes a lover—a true lover. I, like all girls—especially small town girls—read many novels, and had expected Landry to be like my pet hero. And he wasn't, the least bit.

I know now that he was a perfectly good husband, as everyday husbands go.

About this time Landry became associated with a large hospital in a neighboring town. He was quite elated over it, notwithstanding that I grumbled because it meant still more frequent absences from home. But Landry patiently explained the benefit it would be to him; particularly the practice in surgery—in which he hoped some day to specialize.

We had gone to the theater. In the middle of the last

act I suddenly thought of a telephone call I had taken that afternoon. It was from the hospital. I started to tell Landry, then realized it was too late to do anything about it; and so concluded to wait until we reached home.

"What was it you started to tell me at the theater, Sybil?" he asked on our return.

"Why, Doctor Ward called you up about half an hour before you came in to dress, and said to tell you to come right over; or to call him as soon as you came in. You were so late, and I was so anxious to get to the theater I forgot all about it."

"You took the message yourself?" Landry asked severely.

"Yes, I told you I did! No chance to blame Kate this time."

"And, you, a doctor's wife, took a message from a surgeon of Doctor Ward's standing, and knowing whom it was from, forgot it?" Landry said as he started for the telephone.

"Yes, I just told you that I did! For heaven's sake don't be cross about it and spoil the only evening we've had together in ages!"

Landry made no reply, but called the hospital, then asked for Doctor Ward.

I stood so close to Landry I could hear almost the entire conversation. Doctor Ward was evidently very much put out; for he talked very loudly and very excitedly.

"Where in the world have you been?" I heard him say, and then a lot more about a wonderful operation; and what Landry had missed by not being there to assist.

"I have only just come in," Landry told him. "I am

more disappointed than I can express, doctor. Had I received the message I should have gone at once as you know."

Then Doctor Ward said something more about its being a great pity, and rung off.

Landry turned to me too angry to speak. He thought I had pretended to forget so that he would go to the theater. And without waiting to find out he gave full vent to his anger. He accused me of purposely not telling him; and saying many other cruel things, some of them totally undeserved.

"I would have given a year of my life to have helped with that particular operation!" he said. "I may never get another chance. A nice doctor's wife you are, Sybil. I do wish you'd realize that if I am ever to succeed you have got to help me—at least that you must not hinder me as you have to-night."

"If you have finished your ungentlemanly tirade, Doctor Jones, I will go to bed," I told him, and I went into the guest room and locked the door. For the second time since our marriage I slept away from Landry.

Again and again at the breakfast table Landry referred to the occurrence of the night before, blaming me bitterly for not giving him Doctor Ward's message.

"Do not expect me home until late to-night," he said as he left the house. "I am going over to the hospital after I make what calls are necessary."

"Please explain to Doctor Ward that I very carelessly forgot his message. As he does not know me as well as you do, he may believe me," I said in my grandest manner.

Landry made no answer, but took his bag, and with a perfunctory kiss left the house.

"I don't care! I'm glad I did forget!" I said aloud.

"I guess it's up to him to take me somewhere once in a while." Then I straightway forgot all about it.

All day, however, I had an uncomfortable feeling. I was still angry at Landry for blaming me so severely for my forgetfulness; but back of it all was a guilty feeling that I should not have forgotten. That it was my business to remember.

That morning's mail brought me a letter from a cousin who lived in a distant state. She wasn't very well, and her doctor had advised a change. If it were convenient she would make us a visit.

I was delighted. Margaret Lattimer, mother's sister's child, was just my age. When we were quite small they had lived in Horning; and I had been very fond of Margaret.

I replied immediately, telling her how glad I should be to have her; and that she must plan to stay indefinitely. I was so excited over the prospect of her visit that I ran right over to tell Claire. I had to pass her house, anyway, on the way to post my letter.

"Oh, I am so glad!" Claire enthused, "I remember her. We must give her a good time. It's too bad she didn't come when Dot was here, and the weather was warm. But I guess we'll find something to do. By the way, Sybil, have you heard that Homer Carleton is to remain here some time at least? His uncle isn't well. You know he is old, and he wants Homer to stay and help him. He's a lawyer, too, you know. That is, he can be one, since he graduated from a law school. But up to now I believe he's doing nothing but having a good time. Isn't he fascinating?"

"I thought him very attractive," I replied.

"He came over to call last night and he brought me those lovely violets," Claire said, as she pointed to a

bowl filled with the fragrant blossoms. "Wasn't it dear of him?"

There was no reason in the world why I should have felt annoyed because Homer Carleton chose to call on Claire, and give her flowers. Yet I could not get it out of my mind all day. And I determined to treat him very coldly should he call upon me again.

It was nearly midnight when Landry came in. But I was so full of my news, so excited and pleased over it I could scarcely wait until he had taken off his hat and coat to tell him.

"I had a letter from my cousin, Margaret Lattimer. You don't know her, but she's just my age, and a dear. She is coming to visit us. She hasn't been well, and the doctor thinks a change will do her good."

"That will be fine," Landry said, when I stopped long enough for him to speak. "You will not be so lonely when I am out. And it looks as though I should be at the hospital a great deal this winter."

"But you must help me give her a good time," I explained, not even the fact of Margaret's coming could reconcile me to the idea of Landry being out more than at present. "She will think it very queer if you are out all the time."

A look of impatience crossed Landry's face. A look which afterward I learned to dread; but which now brought nothing but irritation at the profession he had chosen.

"I will do the best I can, Sybil. I always do," and he retired to the library and shut himself in with his books as he so often did, giving me another cause of complaint.

My cousin, Margaret Lattimer, arrived. Mother was almost as pleased as was I at having Margaret. She in-

sisted that we stay there to luncheon the day she came, and proposed we telephone for Landry to run over when he came in. So I called Kate, and told her to give the doctor mother's message.

"He just telephoned he wouldn't be home for lunch, ma'am," Kate told me.

"You see, Mother, how it is," I grumbled. Then to Margaret, "I have the most irresponsible husband, Margaret; I never can depend on him for a single thing!"

"But a doctor cannot help it, can he? If he is called out he has to go. He isn't to blame for people being sick. I should think you would be awfully proud to be a doctor's wife; they do so much good in the world. More than any one else, I sometimes think. You know I have been sick a great deal, and so have come to know doctors pretty well."

"Of course I love Landry, but if I had my life to live over again I would make him choose some other profession before I married him," I replied with all the egotism of twenty.

"But, Sybil," Margaret broke in, "I would rather marry a man who did things; one who helped people, than a millionaire."

"Well, I wouldn't, not if he was going to spend all his time away from me, as Landry does." Just then mother called:

"Lunch is ready, girls," and our conversation was interrupted.

"Oh, what a good luncheon!" Margaret exclaimed, as mother brought on waffles and syrup. "Landry—I'm going to call him that, Sybil—doesn't know what he missed."

"Food makes no difference to him!" I pouted. "Sometimes when I've fussed all the morning he

couldn't tell what he was eating. It's awfully discouraging to get up a nice meal for a man, then have him thinking about measles, or typhoid, or some one's broken leg instead of what he's eating."

Mother and Margaret both laughed; but mother said soberly after a moment:

"Don't let it make you careless about your table, dear. A man as busy as Landry needs good, wholesome, well-prepared food even though he doesn't know what he is eating."

Landry didn't come in until dinner time. Margaret was alone in the living room, and she told me afterward that Landry introduced himself by saying:

"This is Cousin Margaret, I am sure; I am Landry," and when I went in they were laughing and chatting together as if they had known each other all their lives.

Margaret fitted into our household from the first. She took her place so naturally, so easily that sometimes I wondered how in the world I had got along until she came.

Landry, too, seemed changed. He was more companionable; talked more than he had for many weeks. If I gave it a thought it was of thankfulness that he had decided to change his ways, and show me more attention. That it was due to Margaret's influence I never imagined—not for a long time.

The bell rang. Margaret and I were cozily chatting in my room, Margaret lying on the couch, I leaning back in an easy chair.

"Oh, dear, I hope it isn't any one to call!" I said just as Kate rapped on the door and announced "Mr. Carleton, ma'am."

"Do come on down with me, Margaret. He's the most fascinating man; a nephew of the lawyer who had charge

of Landry's uncle's affairs. And he's the handsomest man I ever saw."

"After that description I'd have to come whether I wanted to or not," Margaret laughed, "but you run on down. I must fix my hair a little."

"Don't be long," I called as I hurried out of the room and down the stairs; my heart beating a little faster at the thought of Homer Carleton.

"Am I intruding? I heard you had a guest and took the liberty of bringing you some flowers," he greeted, as he gave me two immense bunches of violets.

"Oh, how lovely!" I exclaimed, "and so thoughtful of you." I knew he must have sent to the city for them. "Yes, my cousin, Margaret Lattimer, is visiting me. I want you to meet her, as she will remain indefinitely. She is not very strong; and her physician advised a change. She will be down in a moment."

Just then Margaret glided in. She was mouselike in all her movements. I never have seen any one so quiet.

"Margaret, Mr. Carleton," I began, "he has brought us the most wonderful violets. He heard you were here, and so remembered us both."

"They are very lovely," Margaret said, without animation, keenly appraising Homer Carleton. And, although she was perfectly polite, I had a feeling that she disliked Homer. Rather, that she did not like him. Perhaps dislike was too strong a word.

Homer remained for some time. He was very pleasant, but Margaret left the entire onus of entertaining him upon me.

"Wasn't it nice of him to bring us those lovely violets?" I exclaimed after he left. "He had to send away for them, too. But he's so rich that wouldn't mean anything to him. How did you like him?"

"I don't think I like him, Sybil! I don't think he is real. I don't know that you understand just what I mean, but there is something about him which doesn't ring true. What does Landry think of him?"

"He hasn't met him yet," I replied. Margaret had a way of asking what Landry thought, or of referring to his judgment that annoyed me. "He'll like him when he does. All the men do."

"I don't believe Landry will."

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know! But he is so true, so real himself that I imagine he would see through a person as shallow as Mr. Carleton."

I felt annoyed at Margaret's criticism of Homer. I really liked him very much—rather I liked his attention, his compliments. So later in the day I again introduced his name, purposely to hear what Margaret would say.

"I shouldn't think Landry would care to have him bring you flowers," Margaret said, apropos of a remark I had made.

"Why should he object?" I queried.

"I think most married men would—young married men especially. Why, you are nothing but bride and groom. You haven't been married six months yet. I'm surprised he isn't jealous."

"Landry doesn't take time to be jealous, and there's nothing to be jealous about. Why, he brought you the same flowers he did me and he had never even met you."

"A very clever man!" Margaret returned.

"But, Margaret, you mustn't be so narrow! No one is nowadays." I had read that somewhere. "Homer Carleton's bringing me a bunch of flowers means absolutely nothing. It's a city custom we are not used to, that's all."

"What would you think if Landry gave flowers to the young ladies of his acquaintance? Would you enjoy it?"

My thoughts flew at once to Louisa Lawrence. Perhaps Landry did send her flowers. She always had them in her room.

"Oh, Landry wouldn't without asking me," I answered Margaret. "It is quite different. Homer is a bachelor."

"You mean to imply that if Mr. Carleton were married he would not send you flowers without asking his wife?" Margaret returned. "I'm afraid you'd not receive many from him," we both laughed, so relieving the situation, which was becoming strained.

"But really, Margaret," I resumed after a minute, "why shouldn't a rich bachelor send flowers to whom he wishes? He means nothing save a little compliment, and I am sure they mean nothing to me. I dearly love flowers, and Landry seems to have forgotten they grow, although he used to bring them to me when we were first married."

"Perhaps he feels he can't afford them now," Margaret suggested in her quiet way.

"Perhaps, then he has no right to object if others can," I returned.

"But according to your own admission what's sauce for the goose isn't sauce for the gander, Sybil. You said you wouldn't want Landry to give flowers to the young ladies of his acquaintance."

"I'd like to catch him, that's all," I laughed.

I had soon found that in spite of her quiet ways, her meekness, that Margaret could be very stubborn at times.

CHAPTER IX

FROM the first Margaret resented being treated like an invalid, although it was very evident she was one. Landry at once took her under his charge, and insisted that she strictly obey his instructions.

She had improved since coming with us: but was still very delicate, and unable to endure much excitement.

Landry sent her to bed at a ridiculously early hour, and would not allow her to get up to breakfast. She was sleeping much better and offered no objections as she had at first.

One afternoon when Margaret was lying down Homer Carleton called. At first I thought I'd call her; then I remembered that Landry had warned against waking her when she felt disposed to sleep, so refrained.

Homer as usual had not come empty-handed. This time it was a big box of bon-bons. As I sat munching them, chatting gaily and having really a very enjoyable time, I heard Landry come in.

"There's my husband!" I exclaimed, jumping up, "you must meet him!" and I went to the door and called Landry, "Come in, dear," I said, "Mr. Carleton is here and I think you have not met."

"No——" Landry said, extending his hand, "I'm glad to meet you, Carleton; I know your uncle very well."

"Yes, he has spoken of you frequently! Says you're the rising young physician, and other wholly complimentary things. He was a great friend of your uncle's. He hasn't been well since the old doctor passed away."

"They had been chums all their lives," Landry returned, "and when one is old the breaking of such a friendship means a great deal to the one left behind."

I thought they were becoming awfully solemn so I passed the bon-bons.

"Mr. Carleton must have known I have a sweet tooth," I remarked.

"He is very thoughtful," Landry replied, rather stiffly, I thought.

"I wanted to call Margaret," I hurried to say, "but was afraid she might be sleeping." Then I explained to Homer: "The doctor doesn't like to have me disturb her. But you'll see her frequently as she will remain all winter with us."

After Homer left I proceeded to tell Landry how glad I was he had come in in time to meet him. "He has been to call several times since Margaret came; and it was embarrassing not to have you know him."

"So he comes to call on Margaret, does he? I shouldn't think him at all her type."

"Don't you like him?" I asked.

"I neither like nor dislike a man the first time I meet him. He doesn't impress me particularly, but he may improve on further acquaintance. What does Margaret think of him?"

Landry's eyes were upon me, and I tried to look unconscious; but felt myself flushing.

"She says he doesn't seem real, to her," I acknowledged. "Margaret has queer notions, you know; some of them are terribly old-fashioned, too."

"She seems pretty level-headed to me," Landry mused.

"That's right, disagree with me, and stick up for her!" I snapped. This was the first time Landry's

championship of Margaret had ever annoyed me. Now because of his slighting remarks about Homer, I flared up at his defense of my cousin. At least I considered his remarks slighting.

"I had no intention of provoking a discussion," Landry returned quietly.

"Neither had I, but I notice you stick up for Margaret no matter what she says or does."

"Sybil, come into the library, please; I want to talk to you before I go out," Landry said as we rose from the breakfast table.

Wondering what he had to say, but not at all disturbed, I followed him into the library as he had requested. He opened a drawer of the desk and took out a lot of papers. I saw at once that they were bills. I felt no concern because of them, as we never had disagreed in the least over household expenses.

"We will have to economize in some way, Sybil. I must have books and instruments. Our bills this last month have been altogether too large for our income. Some of them will have to wait. Now I want to know if you can suggest any way to reduce our expenses?"

"Why—no. I am sure I am not extravagant!" I replied.

"I did not say you were. Yet it is extravagant to live beyond our means. And that's what we are doing," Landry returned, running the bills through his fingers.

"As I understand it you want the house expenses cut so you can spend the money for something else!"

"Yes, to advance myself in my profession, and to enable me to earn more money in the end, as well as to be of more use."

"And you expect me to go without things; to work

so that you can some time be of more use to some one," I grumbled.

"I told you when we were first married, Sybil, that you, my own desires, everything, must give way to my profession, if I were ever to amount to anything. I haven't liked to propose it; but now that Margaret is better, and is to remain all winter, couldn't you let Kate go? Have a woman in to wash and do the heavy cleaning, and you and Margaret manage the rest?"

I looked at Landry in amazement. So this was what he had meant when he talked economy. I was to do the housework so that he might buy expensive instruments and office fittings. I was so angry I could scarcely speak, but finally blurted out:

"You should have married a cook, not me. If you think I will work myself to death so that you can have all you want, and I be left alone more than I now am, you are very much mistaken. I would be perfectly willing to do anything I could if you would also promise to remain at home with me; but I don't see why I should work hard and be neglected also."

"Well, talk to Margaret about it," Landry said, ignoring my petulant answer.

"What is it you want to talk to me about?" a voice broke in, and Margaret smilingly stepped into the room.

"Landry thinks I ought to do the housework so he can spend more money for instruments to torture people with; and which will give him added excuse to remain out even more than he does now," I explained.

"You talk with Sybil about it, Margaret," Landry said, then left us.

"Now tell me all about it, Sybil," Margaret said, cuddling down in a big chair as was her custom.

"There's nothing much to tell. Landry wants to spend a lot of money for foolish instruments and books. He only earns a certain amount and it takes it all to live. He wants me to do all the saving so he can spend. It isn't fair, and I sha'n't do it," I finished childishly.

"But, Sybil, you want Landry to succeed. I believe he will be a big man some day—a very big man. He loves his profession, and I heard Doctor Ward say he was a born surgeon. I'll help, and if you have a laundress do the washing and cleaning the rest will be only play. I tell you what would be great sport. You run the house one week, doing all the downstairs work and cooking, and I do the upstairs; then the next week change about. In that way neither of us would get too tired, and we wouldn't be bored by the sameness. Come on, Sybil! Show Landry what a good sport you are."

"But, Margaret, I hate housework. I hated to do it at home. And if Landry gets the instruments he wants, naturally he will be called upon to use them; and that will take him away from me. I do wish he would give up being a doctor and go into business."

"Don't be foolish, Sybil, I think it is a wonderful profession. Landry isn't cut out for a business man; and if you keep finding fault with his choice of a profession it will make him unhappy."

I had just fallen asleep when the telephone rang. Landry jumped up quickly and I heard him say:

"I'll be right over, Dora!" Then he commenced to dress.

"Who was it?" I asked, wondering if he would tell me.

"Dora Lawrence."

"Is Louisa sick again?"

"Yes."

"It's all nonsense getting you up in the middle of the night like this! I don't believe she's a bit sick. She can't sleep probably, and wants you to talk to her," I grumbled, coming nearer the truth than I knew.

Landry made no answer, but finished dressing in silence. As he started to leave the room I asked:

"How long will you be gone?"

"I don't know. Go back to sleep. I'll try not to waken you when I come in."

That was easier said than done. I lay for a long time thinking about Landry, wondering about Louisa. Then I began to turn over in my mind his proposition of the morning. Would it please him; make him love me more if I did as he wished and helped him by saving what Kate cost us in wages and board? Margaret had been so willing that she had shamed me a bit; although I had bluffed it out with her as well as with Landry.

Strange at it may seem I loved Landry very dearly. I know it must appear that I did not because of my unwillingness to help, to trust him. Had my love for Landry been more unselfish, I would have been content to do anything to advance his interests. But I was very selfish; very unthoughtful, I know now. I was a drag upon him; a hindrance where I might have been a help, but that I did not realize until later—much later.

Twenty doesn't stop to reason; at that age we only feel.

I had fallen into an uneasy sleep when Landry returned, but he wakened me. The hands of the clock pointed to five. He had been gone four hours.

"Was Louisa very sick?" I asked sleepily.

"No—but I didn't think best to leave her sooner,"

he returned as he crawled back into bed; first setting the alarm for seven.

"What do you want to get up at that time for, when you have been up all night?"

"I have a call to make," and in a moment was fast asleep.

I didn't go back to sleep, but lay watching him. He looked very tired, very worn. Suddenly a rush of love came over me, and I put my arms around him, laying my head in the crook of his arm.

He seemed to sense my nearness and murmured "darling," though he did not waken. I made up my mind while lying close to him that I would do as he wished, I would economize for his sake. And after I had made the decision I felt happier than I had in a long time.

Man-like, he took my resolve as a matter of course, when, as he dressed, I announced it.

"That's a good girl. You'll not be sorry later," was about all he said, but kissed me fondly, and I sang about my work, happy that I had pleased him.

That I was of a strangely contradictory nature I now realize. But I had all my life been amenable to love; to—I suppose one might call it—flattery. And as I look back I feel that in those first months of my married life I expected more than Landry was able to give. His mind was so filled with his work; he was so ambitious to succeed, that he hadn't the time to devote to me.

After he left I went up to Margaret, and told her that I had decided to let Kate go.

"I am glad, Sybil. Landry will appreciate it I know. And it won't be for long that you will have to deny yourself for him. He'll be famous some day, and then you'll be repaid for anything you may do now."

"You seem very sure he will be famous."

"I am! I have the utmost faith in him," she replied.

It seemed strange when I thought of it that Margaret should be so sure of Landry; so positive that he would make good; that her faith was so much greater than was mine—his wife.

Kate had been gone about a week. It was my turn to do the downstairs work. We had decided to try Margaret's scheme and see how it worked out. I had a dust cap over my hair, and a big apron covered my dress. The bell rang, and without thinking I went to the door.

I was crimson with mortification when I saw that my early caller was Homer Carleton. I invited him in, apologizing as I did so.

"I am my own kitchen girl now, so you'll pardon my appearance," I said, expecting him to reply in some facetious way. Instead of which he said seriously:

"You don't mean you are doing your own work! Is your maid ill?"

"No; discharged," I said bluntly, although I tried to laugh. "I'm trying to be economical," I added in a spirit of braggadocio. I would not let this man see how embarrassed I was that he should find me doing menial work.

"Well, I think you deserve a lot of credit, but it's too bad for you to do such things. You never were intended for it."

"No, I was intended 'to sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, and live upon strawberries, sugar and cream,' I suppose," I returned, at which we both laughed.

"I came to ask you and Miss Lattimer to take a spin out into the country. My new car just came and I want to try it out. Do you suppose you can leave this," with a comprehensive glance around, "long enough to come?"

"Indeed I can! I'll run up and tell Margaret. What time do you want us to go?"

"I'll come around about two o'clock. Later it gets pretty cold."

Margaret was almost as much excited as I was. We hurried luncheon—Landry didn't come home—then dressed and were all ready when we heard the honk-honk of a car in front of the house.

"What a beauty!" I exclaimed as we ran down the steps. It was a stunning car. A battleship gray, upholstered in leather almost the same shade. It would seat five comfortably, and Homer asked if there was any one else I would like to take along.

"Why, let's stop for Claire!" I replied, "I know she'd love to go."

"All right; you sit in front with me, Mrs. Jones, and Miss Adams can sit with your cousin in the tonneau."

I climbed in beside him, never giving a thought to the nicety with which he had planned to have me sit in front with him. Rather I felt flattered at the invitation.

Claire was delighted to go, and we were a very merry party as we started out into the country.

"It must be lovely to be able to afford such a car!" I said effusively after he had explained what a time he had had getting it just to suit him. "I think I'd be satisfied with anything that would go, even a cheap runabout."

"It's a shame you can't have everything you want—if I had my way you should," he added, very low. "I can't tell you how I hate the thought of your doing your own work. It is so unnecessary."

"Not unnecessary, or I shouldn't be doing it," I returned. "But it won't be necessary long, at least Margaret says not."

"Margaret says not!" he repeated after me. "I don't understand what Margaret has to do with it."

I laughed heartily at his puzzled expression, and then explained:

"Margaret has great faith in Landry—Doctor Jones. She declares that he will be a very famous man some day. Doctor Ward, the great surgeon, told her so; and she really believes it."

"And don't you?"

"Oh, I don't know! I hope so."

"We all hope so; but in the meantime I wish I——" he stopped suddenly, bit his lip, and, although I reminded him that he had not finished his sentence, he said nothing more; but devoted himself to his driving. In fact, he didn't speak again until he said good-bye at our door.

CHAPTER X

THE holidays were approaching and Landry had been even busier than usual, if that were possible. He spent much of his time over at the hospital with Doctor Ward, whom he had assisted in many severe operations. He had won praise from him and other medical men connected with the hospital.

Then, too, he had been very successful in one or two cases in Horning—cases which other physicians had given up as hopeless. One little girl in particular who, they said, would never walk, was now walking, haltingly, of course, but still she walked, and was growing stronger all the time. Margaret never tired of talking of how wonderful it was, and how it proved that Landry would one day be the great surgeon he aspired to be.

Landry said nothing about it, but I knew that he saw Louisa Lawrence frequently. I had begun to hate her, yet I did not discontinue going to see her—rather to see both the girls. Dora was a very sweet, wholesome girl, and absolutely devoted to Louisa. Absurdly so, I thought, when she persistently evaded my questions concerning her sister.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, too, appeared over-anxious to change the subject when Louisa's name was mentioned. Yet when Louisa herself saw me, I could detect no difference in her. She was thin, and acted nervous, but that was all. She would chat and laugh as she always had done with Dora and me, until I sometimes thought her sickness was mostly imaginative.

Then one day I called when both Dora and Mrs. Law-

rence were out. I knew Louisa was home, and, without waiting to be announced, I ran upstairs, as I had been accustomed to do before I was married.

Louisa lay on the bed fully dressed. But her eyes were so glassy, and the irises so enlarged that she looked almost strange to me. She talked rapidly, scarcely giving me a chance to say a word. She spoke of Landry, extolling his goodness; but laughing at him as a strict physician.

"He is awfully severe with me, but he's a perfect dear all the same. If he wasn't your husband I'd marry him myself," and a lot more in the same vein.

Now it may be very pleasant to hear one's husband praised, but I doubt if many young wives would care to have as lovely a girl call their husbands "perfect dears" and talk as Louisa Lawrence did to me.

"How is he severe with you?" I asked, hoping to find out why Landry remained with her so long on occasions.

"Oh, he gives me the tiniest bit of medicine when I am nervous, instead of giving me enough to make me sleep; and no matter how much I coax him he won't let me have any more."

"But why can't you sleep?" I queried, not yet understanding. For, although a doctor's wife, I knew absolutely nothing of medicine, and neither was I at all conversant with symptoms. I had been unusually healthy always, and when I had had some little ailment mother had dosed me with home remedies.

"I'm too nervous!" then, "wouldn't you like a little sherry, Sybil?"

"No, I think not." I had never tasted anything of the kind but once or twice in my life, and then had not cared for it. As for liquor, I was like most small town

girls, I knew no one who drank it except the village toughs.

But Louisa insisted, and poured me a little from a bottle in her closet. Then she took a larger glass, and when she thought I wasn't looking, drew a flask from the shelf and poured herself a generous quantity of something a little lighter in color than the sherry. I sipped my wine to please her, but she threw what she had taken down her throat in one gulp, and it smelled like whisky. I knew because Landry kept some in the house in case he needed it for any one in the night.

She became rather drowsy after a bit, and I started to go.

"Remember to be good to Landry!" she said with a sly smile.

As I walked home my mind was in a perfect chaos of jealous anger. I had been right all along. Landry and Louisa were in love with each other. Louisa had as much as told me so; and Landry's actions, I reflected, spoke for him.

Then I thought of that flask, and the hastily swallowed draught. Why had Louisa been so secretive if it had been all right for her to drink it? I remembered that sly glance to see if I noticed that she had not taken both drinks out of the same bottle; and her petulant shrug as I set my glass down practically untasted. I did hope Landry would be at home. I would make him tell me now. He should put me off no longer.

"Has Landry come in yet?" I asked Margaret. It was her week to do the downstairs work, hence my having time to call on Louisa.

"No! But what are you so excited about. Your cheeks are like fire."

"Nothing—that is, nothing much. I just wanted to

talk to Landry." I had no notion to tell Margaret. She had, more than once, agreed with Landry when he had refused to answer my questions.

I could scarcely wait until Landry had taken off his big ulster and overshoes. It had commenced to snow outside and he was white all over "just like a big polar bear," Margaret laughingly remarked before she disappeared into the kitchen to attend to her dinner.

"Now, Landry Jones, you have just got to tell me about Louisa Lawrence! I went down there to call this afternoon and she was all alone. I went upstairs just as I used to do, and she was flopped down on the bed all dressed, and she never offered to get up; but my, how her tongue did run. She never used to be much of a talker, but I couldn't get in a word edgewise——"

"If she talked faster than you are doing now you couldn't have got in a word any wise," Landry said, attempting to be facetious, but I had noticed the scowl with which he always received my inquiries.

"Well, she told me lots of things. That you wouldn't give her enough medicine to make her sleep; and that you were——" I stopped. I had no notion to tell Landry Louisa had called him "a perfect dear," and the words had almost escaped me.

"I was what?" he queried, with what I imagined an anxious look and inflection.

"Oh, awfully severe with her, and a lot of stuff like that."

I thought Landry looked relieved. Had he been afraid that Louisa had told me they were in love with each other?

"All patients think the doctors severe, especially if they are obliged to give them medicine they don't like," he returned, calmly.

"But, Landry, what is wrong with Louisa? You might as well tell me, even if you——" Again I was going to let him know that I had found out they cared for each other, but caught myself in time and finished lamely: "have made up your mind not to. I saw things this afternoon——"

"You saw what things?" Landry demanded.

"Well, for one thing, she wanted me to have some sherry. When I refused, she insisted. She went to her closet and took the sherry bottle out of the corner, and poured out a little into a glass. Then she looked round as slyly as could be, and, when she thought I wasn't looking, she pulled a flask out from under some things on the shelf and filled another glass from that. I wish you could have seen her drink it! It was down in a second. What do you suppose it was?" I asked, artfully.

I had not failed to notice a sort of relief cross Landry's face as I talked. What did he expect I was going to tell him? Was I no nearer the real truth than before? The thought was maddening.

Landry had not answered my question: and just then Margaret came in to tell us her dinner was ready and that it would be spoiled if we didn't come out at once.

"What was it, Landry?" I insisted, paying no attention to Margaret's signals of distress. She was a very good cook; and also very impatient of her food being spoiled by standing.

"Louisa has formed the habit of taking a drink of whisky occasionally. She has been sleepless for a long time, and she thinks it helps her," he said very soberly.

"Poor girl!" Margaret said, softly. "You must do all you can for her, Landry," but I felt Landry had not told me all. So I said scornfully:

"Poor girl! Why, she's just a plain drunkard," and that both Landry and Margaret looked shocked troubled me not at all.

After we sat down to the table Margaret reverted to the subject.

"Such a lovely girl," she remarked, apropos of some remark I made, "it's a dreadful pity."

Landry flashed her a grateful glance. I saw it and it irritated me.

"I don't see that she deserves your pity," I grumbled, "if she's such a fool as to do a thing like that."

"Aren't you rather hard, Sybil?" Landry said quietly. I had noticed that his dinner remained uneaten, though we had dishes he liked. "You may have faults yourself, you know."

"According to you I have plenty. One being my failure to admire Louisa Lawrence," I returned.

Margaret looked up surprised, as Landry said:

"I hope neither of you will ever mention what Sybil saw this afternoon. It can do no possible good and may do harm. Let Louisa think you were deceived into thinking she drank sherry from the same bottle from which she poured yours. If you speak of it, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence are apt to hear it and be unhappy." Then he added slowly, "I am in hopes that Louisa can be made to see the folly of what she is doing, and that I can help her break that habit and—others."

"What others?" I said quickly, and Landry flushed crimson. I do not think he meant to say what he had; it sort of slipped out.

"Her sleeplessness," he answered, then commenced to talk of something else. I watched him closely, and saw that he was troubled all through dinner. He went out immediately afterwards.

"I'll bet he's gone to see Louisa Lawrence," I said to Margaret as we cleared away.

"Poor Louisa," she murmured. "Landry is a wonderful man for one so young, Sybil. You must be awfully proud of him. I should be."

"It seems that all the women are a little daffy over Landry," I sneered, "and now you are also becoming silly about him."

"Why, Sybil!" Margaret exclaimed in a shocked tone, but I noticed a dull red flush creep up over her neck and face, then recede and leave her even whiter than she naturally was.

For a moment I was stunned. I had not really meant anything by what I had said to Margaret, and her manner was startlingly suggestive. Was my own cousin in love with my husband? Then, childlike, I wished that Landry were not so handsome; that he were repulsive even, so that I might have him all to myself.

Was I an unusual woman—or girl? I was little else at that time. Isn't jealousy a disease, the same as alcoholism, or any other habit to which we give free rein? I think so. And I also think myself not an anomaly among women, especially the wives of men whose professions throw them constantly with women in an intimate way—clergymen and doctors.

Landry remained out but a short time. He had scarcely seated himself with his paper, however, before Dwight Smith, my brother-in-law, came in. After greeting Margaret and me, he said something I couldn't hear to Dwight, and they went into the library and closed the door.

I waited for a few minutes, then went in—rather I tried to, but couldn't until Landry unlocked the door.

"What in the world are you two doing, locked in

here?" I asked. "Come on out and have a game of bridge."

"Not tonight, Sybil," Dwight answered quietly, but I noticed traces of emotion on his face.

"Dwight wishes to consult me about something, Sybil; you and Margaret will have to excuse us to-night."

"Well, I call it a mean trick for you two men to shut yourselves up here like this when we girls are just dying for a good game of cards—Margaret is a splendid player, Dwight," I added. I knew his fondness for the game and hoped to make him change his mind about playing.

"Some other night, Sybil," was all he said, and, after standing first on one foot and then on the other for a few minutes and receiving no further encouragement, I left them.

I heard the key turn again in the lock. What in the world were they talking about? When I spoke to Margaret about it she only laughed and said:

"Perhaps Dwight is going to get married again."

"But why should he want to talk it over with Landry, and who in the world could it be? He's such a prig, and really I don't think he has looked at a girl since Felice died."

Christmas was so near and I was so busy that I forgot to worry about Landry for the next few days.

Margaret and I were quite hilarious because we should have no responsibilities the entire day. Mother was to have a midday dinner, and we were going to Claire's for supper.

We had taken our gifts for each other over to mother's, and were to have them distributed after dinner. Then,

after we left Claire's we were to return and light the tree; and have a "real old-fashioned time," as father expressed it.

"Merrie Christmas!" I called, awakening first; and "Merrie Christmas!" they both answered in a breath.

I scrambled out of bed and we hurried through breakfast. We were to meet the others on the lake at nine o'clock.

They were all there when we arrived. Some had on skates for the first time that winter, and their falls were ludicrous in the extreme.

Homer Carleton skated beautifully, and he kept close to my side. Landry was very impartial. He skated first with one, then with another. Dwight only pretended to skate. Louisa sat on the bank watching us; and he remained with her most of the time. Yet I noticed that when he did leave her for a few minutes, Landry quickly made his way to her side.

Suddenly, as Homer and I were doing a pigeon wing, the ice cracked and then broke beneath us. Down we went into the icy water. But only for a moment; and we were pulled out more frightened than hurt. Landry took me directly home, and insisted upon giving me a hot drink, and rubbing me with alcohol.

"That was a lucky spill." His words were careless, but the tender look he gave me showed his feeling.

"Wasn't it?" Margaret rejoined; "I was frightened almost to death for a minute."

"All's well that ends well," I quoted, and I insisted upon getting dressed. "Don't tell mother!" I cautioned, but Landry said she would be sure to hear of it from some one and that it would be better for us to tell her immediately.

She fairly gasped when we told her, and both father

and she held me in a long, loving embrace when they wished me all the compliments of the season. Father gave me a check for fifty dollars, in addition to their other presents. I don't think he had intended to until he heard about my unexpected bath. He left the room for a few moments, and when he gave me the check I noticed an ink smudge on his finger. When I told Landry the next day he laughingly said that I should have been a Sherlock Holmes.

We had a wonderfully happy time at mother's; not a single thing marred our pleasure. Her dinner was a marvel, and we ate almost to bursting. After dinner father and the boys—as he called Landry and Dwight—repaired to the library to smoke, while Margaret, mother and I went up to mother's room to talk. An hour later, when we went downstairs, we found all three men fast asleep. Father on the couch, and Dwight and Landry each in a big easy chair.

Our hilarious laughter wakened them; and we teased them unmercifully because they had eaten so much they couldn't keep awake.

At seven o'clock we strolled over to Claire's. We found Homer Carleton there, and had a delicious light supper; then danced a little. But we left early, as I knew father and mother would be waiting to light the tree; that a big dishpan of buttered popcorn and a dish of butternuts would be waiting for us; and that father's dear old heart would be broken if we failed to have time to appreciate all he had done.

When we finally blew out the candles on the trees we all declared it the very nicest Christmas we ever had known.

CHAPTER XI

As I have said, Homer Carleton was rather masterful. And most women like a masterful man. I do not mean a man who exercises a sort of petty tyranny; that disgusts a woman. Landry was naturally masterful enough, I noticed in his professional attitude, but he hadn't time to be anything with me; he was at home so little.

Like millions of other women, I would have worked ten times as hard for his success, had he impressed upon me the necessity of so doing because I was his wife and he demanded it from me. I honestly believe many wives have no idea what they think about a certain matter until their husbands oppose them in it.

Bits of conversation about Landry's wonderful ability floated my way now and then; but he never discussed his affairs with me. We had not weighed life together on the scales of love and work. Landry was all for work; I all for love. No wonder we stumbled over so many matrimonial rocks even so early in our married life.

In a way I was proud of Landry's popularity. But I also begrudged him the time he gave to his work; the time necessary for so young a man if ever he were to amount to anything. Of one thing I am positive after all these years, and that is, that no doctor should marry a very young girl. Neither should he marry until he knows something of the girl's attitude toward his necessary intimacy with other women. It was the rock on which we split; it will be the fatal stumbling block of many others.

Louisa Lawrence had been in Doctor Ward's hospital for nearly a week. I knew nothing of it; Landry of course hadn't mentioned it. I don't know that I should have found it out at all if Doctor Ward hadn't been called to New York on a very important matter of business, and had asked Landry to take his place while he was gone.

"It is a great responsibility, Landry," Margaret said when he told us. "I should think you would be very proud."

"Not so proud as pleased," Landry replied; "pleased that Doctor Ward thinks me capable."

"Will you have to stay over there?" I asked.

"Certainly! I shall ask Doctor Holden to look after my patients." Doctor Holden was a very young man, only lately come to Horning, and as Landry's work at the hospital increased had taken charge of some of the lighter cases.

"He seems like a nice fellow," Margaret remarked.

"He is!" Landry answered, "and a very good doctor as well. He stood very high in his classes at Princeton."

"He's a Princeton man, is he?" Margaret returned. "I know one or two men who went there. Perhaps we have mutual friends."

"Careful, Margaret! Holden is a bachelor, you know."

We all laughed, but it gave me an idea.

"I believe I'll ask him to dinner," I said, turning to Landry.

"Do! Invite him to take New Year's dinner with us."

"But, Landry! Will you be home?"

"I'll come to dinner, even if I can't stay any longer," he promised. And it was settled that when he asked

Doctor Holden to take charge of his patients he should also invite him to dinner.

It was Doctor Holden who told me about Louisa.

"Do you know how Miss Lawrence is getting along?" he asked. He had arrived before Landry did on New Year's day, and we were chatting in the library while waiting.

"Miss Louisa? Is she sick again?" I asked.

"Yes; that is, she has been at Doctor Ward's since the day after Christmas. I understood she was taking some kind of a treatment for nervous trouble."

So that was the reason Landry was so willing to stay at the hospital while Doctor Ward was away, I thought, just as I heard Landry's voice and Margaret's gay greeting.

It was all I could do to curb my impatience until I could decently speak of what I had just heard. After Landry had greeted Doctor Holden and asked after some of his patients, I asked:

"How is Louisa Lawrence? Is she taking a cure?"

"She's doing nicely," Landry replied to my first question. Then, with an angry, meaning glance at me, he changed the subject.

In spite of my uneasy thoughts of Louisa Lawrence, we had a gay little New Year's dinner. I saw that Doctor Holden made a good impression on father, and that he and Margaret got along splendidly.

"Wouldn't it be nice if he and Margaret were to fall in love with each other," I thought as I watched them talking together with animation. "She would make an ideal doctor's wife." That thought brought to mind the intimacy which seemed to have developed between Landry and Margaret. An intimacy of which both were

seemingly unconscious, but which I had several times noticed.

Margaret was so dreadfully interested in all that Landry did. Not interested as I was, because of curiosity or jealousy, but genuinely interested. She never asked questions, but seemed intuitively to know just when to talk of his work to him. He never told her that he considered it a matter of bad form to discuss things with her; though I must confess he never talked of his patients as individuals, but only of his work. Especially his surgical work.

Mother and I were alone for a few moments and I told her what I had been thinking about regarding Margaret and Doctor Holden.

She shook her head with a wise smile.

"Better let matchmaking alone, Sybil," she said. "In all the stories I ever have read the matchmaking person came to grief."

Every human being responds more quickly to love and sympathy than to the exercise of authority and the display of distrust. I was no exception to this; neither was Landry. The trouble with me was that I thought he was; that no matter how much distrust I displayed he would not change toward me. To me the Golden Rule worked only one way.

The very next day I proposed to Margaret that we go over to the hospital, call upon Louisa and see Landry. Of course, Margaret had no idea of the reasons which actuated me, and quickly consented.

The towns were connected by street cars, the hospital being about half an hour's ride from the house. When we arrived, instead of asking for Landry, I informed the nurse that I was Doctor Jones's wife, and that I had called to see Miss Lawrence.

She hesitated only a moment, then told us to come with her.

Louisa was sitting up in bed. She looked even more lovely than usual, though she was pale and had great dark circles under her eyes. She had on a pale blue lace-trimmed jacket and cap, which, I at once noticed, were crisp and new. Probably bought with the idea of pleasing Landry, I thought. He, like most men, was very fond of blue.

At first Louisa seemed glad to see us; then I noticed after a bit she became very nervous. Margaret also observed it, and said:

"I'll run on and wait for Sybil outside. I think two of us is one too many."

She had scarcely closed the door when Louisa began to cry, quietly, but with convulsive sobs, picking at the coverlet with her nervous fingers and letting the big tears fall unheeded.

"What is it, Louisa? What are you crying about?"

"Oh, Sybil! I know you don't like me, but can't you get your husband to be kinder to me? Please go away and send him here. Perhaps when he sees how I need him he won't refuse."

I looked at Louisa in amazement. Why should she want Landry to be kind to her? Why should I go away and send him? The nurse had told me she was doing nicely; that Landry had just left her. Well, I wouldn't go! and I would tell Louisa Lawrence what I thought of her!

"Indeed I shall not send Landry to you! I should think you would be ashamed to ask me! I'm not the fool you and Landry take me for, and the sooner you realize it the better. Don't you suppose I know why

you are here in this hospital dressed up to look attractive. I know all right and——”

Just then the door opened and Landry, his face set and stern, came into the room. Louisa had not spoken, but now her sobs were frightful to hear.

The moment I saw Landry's face I was frightened. He came directly up to me, took hold of my arm and fairly pushed me out of the room, until the door closed on me, leaving him on the inside with Louisa. I had no time to think. But when, angry and puzzled, I tried to return, I found the door locked.

What did it mean? Here was I, Landry's wife, locked out of the room in which were he and Louisa Lawrence. She had begged me, his wife, to ask him to be kinder to her. It could all have but one meaning. Landry and Louisa were in love with each other—Louisa was willing to go any length, but Landry as yet, probably because of his professional pride, would not seriously compromise himself.

I was sure I had arrived at the right solution of the affair and, indignant, each moment growing more furiously angry, I pounded with both fists on the door, demanding to be allowed to come in. Margaret tried to hold me back. She begged me to keep quiet.

“You will make a terrible scandal, Sybil, the nurses can all hear,” she told me.

“What do I care for the nurses, or anyone else!” I almost screamed. “That shameless creature and Landry are locked in—do you understand, locked in—that room, and I, his wife, am locked out.”

The door opened and Landry came out. He was white and his voice trembled as he said:

“You are becoming hysterical, Sybil, and with no

reason. You and Margaret must come to the office," and he strode ahead, a look on his face I had never seen before.

"Sit down," he said after he had closed the door. "Now tell me what all this is about."

"Tell you!" I laughed sarcastically, scarcely knowing what I said. "Why should I tell you what you and every one else know, that you are carrying on a disgraceful affair with Louisa Lawrence; that you couldn't take Doctor Ward's place for a few days without bringing her over here so you wouldn't be separated. And she, the shameless girl, asked me, your wife, to beg you to come to her! Oh, I won't stand it! I won't!"

"I shall not stand it much longer," Landry said, so quietly I should have been warned. "You are making a fool of yourself and me. What do you suppose the nurses think of your outburst?"

"What do I care what they think? They are nothing to me!"

"Why did you come here?" he asked. The question was inconsequential, but it angered me afresh.

"Because I heard that you had her brought here to be near you while Doctor Ward was away; because I was told she had made an excuse to take a cure of some sort to be with you."

"Who told you that?"

"Your own friend, Doctor Holden."

"Now see here, Sybil, let me get to the bottom of this affair. Just what did Holden tell you?"

"He said Louisa Lawrence was here taking a cure."

"And that was all he told you?"

"Yes."

"So you built up this little story of an affair be-

tween Louisa and me out of your jealous imagination, and then deliberately came over here and insulted me and her, by accusing us of an intimacy before any one who wanted to listen. I will see you to the door and I forbid you to come here again"—then he turned to Margaret. "Why did you let her do this?" he asked.

"I never would have consented to come had I known, Landry."

"I might have understood that," he returned as, without another glance at me, he opened the door.

At first I had an idea that I would refuse to go; but one look at his set, stern face and I walked out. I would wait. I knew the truth now, so I thought, and I would decide what to do.

Margaret never spoke all the way home, but after we had reached the house and taken off our wraps, she said sadly:

"How could you do it, Sybil? How could you?"

"Don't talk to me!" I snapped. "Suppose he were your husband and he was making love to another woman?"

"If Landry were my husband I should trust him."

"Oh, I know you're in love with him, too," I replied, losing all control of myself, all sense of perspective. "Of course you'd say that!"

Margaret and I ate our dinner in silence. Afterward I went into the library and closed the door. About nine o'clock Margaret rapped and asked if she might come in.

"Did you mean what you said to me this afternoon, Sybil?" she asked, "because, if you did, I shall return home immediately."

I realized all at once that I did not want Margaret to go, that I did not want to be alone with Landry.

Then, too, there flashed across my mind my plan concerning Doctor Holden.

"Oh, Margaret, I should think you'd have more sense," I grumbled. "You know I was excited, angry, and hurt. I guess you would have acted just as I did had you been in my place! I don't blame you, because you didn't hear what Louisa Lawrence said to me. If you had you would understand."

"Sybil, I don't care what she said; I don't believe Landry ever had a wrong thought toward you; or anything but a physician's interest in Louisa."

"I tell you you don't know!" I declared.

"Try and trust Landry, Sybil. I am sure he'll explain everything if you will."

"There are some things which never can be explained. This is one of them. I suppose I'll have to do as other wives do—grin and bear it." Then all at once the feeling that I had lost Landry came over me, and I commenced to cry bitterly.

Margaret tried for a while to comfort me, but the more she talked, the harder I cried. Finally she said:

"Cry it out, Sybil. Perhaps you'll feel better if you do."

Neither of us had heard the bell ring. The door was not locked and Doctor Holden had walked in.

"I am intruding! You are in trouble," he said, as he hesitated on the threshold.

"Do come in!" I exclaimed. "I have a headache, and am going to bed. Please talk to Margaret."

I went upstairs and sat down by the window. I didn't make a light; the darkness suited my mood. I soon stopped crying, and sat wondering what to do. Could I ever leave Landry? Could I ever free him so that he might marry Louisa? To both questions I an-

swered, "No!" It made no difference what I suffered, what I had to endure, I could not give him up.

Then I gave myself over to that most tormenting of all conditions for a woman—that of self-pity. I visualized myself as the time went by living without Landry's love; living with him knowing he cared for some one else, and that he wished me to leave him free to go to her.

Once more I wept. This time great scalding tears. Then, tired out with the day's emotions, I undressed and went to bed.

It was late when Margaret and I breakfasted the next morning. I had slept soundly, but awoke unrefreshed.

"You and Doctor Holden appeared to be having a good time," I said as I poured the coffee.

"Yes, I found him charming. He knows a lot of people I do, and that always makes it interesting.

"Do you think he is good-looking?"

"Yes—yes, I think he is very good-looking. Not handsome at all, but manly, and—he is a man to trust I think."

"Like Landry?"

"Yes, a good deal like Landry in that particular. He'll never be as brilliant as Landry; never be so great a physician. But——"

"He'll be as good a husband," I interrupted caustically. "Let us hope so."

Margaret made no reply, and we each took a paper and pretended to be absorbed in what we read. It was only pretense, however, and we both knew it. Finally I threw my paper down and said:

"I'm going out, Margaret. I have heard of a good maid. I am through ruining my hands and complexion doing housework for Landry Jones."

CHAPTER XII

WHEN I returned about noon, a green Irish girl with me, Landry was there.

"Doctor Ward returned unexpectedly," he said coldly, giving me no other greeting, "so I shall not be obliged to stay at the hospital."

I was so astonished to see him, that I could say nothing. Then his cool way of simply stating a fact, the absence of a morning greeting, let me see plainly that I was not forgiven; that I still had to face the consequences of my act at the hospital.

"You mean that you are not going back?" Margaret asked.

"Not to stay," Landry told her.

"I'm glad. We have missed you, haven't we, Sybil?"

"Of course," I replied; what else could I say? But I made the new servant my excuse to leave them and went into the kitchen.

After I had given her some necessary instructions and had become a little less nervous about facing Landry, I returned to the library. Landry was alone.

"I have hired a servant, Landry. I cannot manage without one any longer," I told him, glad to have some simple domestic matter to talk about.

"Very well. I was about to propose it when I returned anyway. My work at the hospital has made it unnecessary for you to deny yourself that comfort."

The cool way in which Landry met every crisis in his life was a constant source of annoyance to me. It angered me to think that no matter what the provoca-

tion, he never lost his self-control. He had come nearer doing so the day before at the hospital than I had ever known him to.

"She's green, and may not do; but I thought I would try her," I told him, determined to give him no chance to say what I felt was in his mind.

He made no answer. I waited a few moments, then went quietly out.

At luncheon Landry and Margaret chatted and laughed as usual. After luncheon was finished Landry went right out. I called after him:

"Shall you be at home for dinner?"

"As far as I know."

I returned to the kitchen and gave Annie her orders for dinner, and spent an hour showing her where I kept things, and telling her how I wished my work done.

"Take particular pains with the dinner tonight," I told Annie. I would give Landry just the things he liked. Then I would ignore yesterday's performance until I decided what to say and do about it. Perhaps he would also.

Landry came in at the usual time. He seemed to enjoy his dinner, but when Margaret proposed that she and I go over to mother's if he had any calls to make and that he stop for us, he said:

"Please go by yourself, Margaret. I will come after you. I want to talk with Sybil, and I may not have another opportunity."

"All right! Come for me about ten, will you? You walk over with Landry, Sybil. It will do you good." Margaret often scolded me because I did not go home oftener.

"I'll be there," Landry answered, and without waiting for me to say anything Margaret left us.

"Come into the library, Sibyl, where we will not be interrupted," and Landry led the way, placing a chair directly opposite his desk, saying quite calmly:

"Sit down there, Sybil."

He had placed me where he could look directly at me; and where I could not evade his glance. I tried to laugh and questioned as carelessly as I could:

"Is this a court of last resort? One would think so, you are so solemn."

Landry paid no attention to my flippant remark.

"It is impossible for me to understand you, Sibyl. You knew very well when you married me that many of my patients would be women. The spectacle you made of yourself, and, incidentally, of me, yesterday has made positive a conviction which has been forming in my mind for weeks. You are by nature and temperament totally unfitted to be a physician's wife. But that does not excuse your actions. We are at the very beginning of our lives. I, at the outset of my career, both lives and career can be ruined very easily. But remember this! I do not intend that you shall ruin either. Wait!" as I started to speak, to disclaim any such intention, to tell him that it was because I loved him, "I have not quite finished. Miss Lawrence will be in the hospital probably for some time——"

"To be near you!" I broke in.

"If you'll allow me," Landry said very quietly, "I will explain——"

"Explain what? There is, there can be no explanation—no true explanation. Louisa begged me, your own wife, to intercede for her; brazenly asked me to beg you to treat her more kindly. And——"

"I have changed my mind, I will not explain—anything. You may think what you will," Landry interrupted. "But I absolutely forbid you to come to the hospital again. I shall not feel at all responsible for the consequences if you do."

"Consequences! what do you mean?" I stormed.

"I told you I should not have my career ruined by a silly woman, and I meant it! I would——"

"You mean that you would leave me?" I asked, staggered by the thought.

"If you compel me to—yes." Then he rose, "I will go for Margaret. Do you care to come along?"

"No. I'll stay here."

He made no response, and in a moment I heard the door close. I was alone.

How dared Landry forbid me to go to the hospital? A place any one could visit. He had said he would leave me if I did anything to hurt him professionally. Would he? I wondered, or was he just trying to frighten me?

I was more than ever convinced that there was something between him and Louisa. I wished faintly I hadn't interrupted, that I had listened when he offered to explain. But after all how could he explain? He would probably only have told me something that would smooth things over.

Should I defy him and visit the hospital again, or should I pretend to give in and find out in some other way what I wished to know? I thought of the stern, set look upon his face when he threatened me, and concluded that I would give in to this. I could not lose Landry, his love. But I should be no meek wife whom he could fool by using his profession as a cloak to hide

his affairs. Oh, why couldn't he have been something beside a doctor?

The next morning Homer ran in as he often did.

We all chatted together for a time, then Margaret excused herself and left Homer and me alone.

"Now tell me all about it," he looked keenly at me.

"All about what?" I was genuinely surprised at his remark.

"What's troubling you."

"Why—why—what makes you think anything is troubling me?"

"I don't think! I know."

"Really you are mistaken," I told him, but I lowered my eyes.

"No, I am not!" he declared. "I knew the moment I saw you that something had happened, won't you tell me—dear?"

Some way, instead of resenting the last word, I felt glad that he cared—that some one cared. But I had no intention of making Homer Carleton my confidante, though I liked him.

"What's Landry been up to now?" was his next question.

"Why should you suppose he has been up to anything?" I parried.

"There is only one thing that gives wives, especially young wives, that look of martyrdom you are wearing, and that is some fancied or real slight by their husbands."

"You are very wise! One would think you were an old married man, instead of a bachelor."

"One doesn't have to be married—when one—cares."

Just then Margaret returned, and the talk became general. He had come to ask Margaret and me to help

him get up some sort of an affair at his uncle's house to repay his social debts.

"Everyone in Horning has been more than kind to me; and I have accepted invitations until I am fairly ashamed to appear on the street. Please help me out. I'd like to give some kind of a party where I could invite everyone."

"Why not give a dinner to those to whom you are most indebted, and follow it by a dance and invite all the others?" Margaret asked.

"An inspiration, Miss Lattimer! I'll make out a list right away, and set the thing in motion. Will you act as hostess for me, Mrs. Jones?" His uncle was a bachelor, and the only woman about the place was the old housekeeper.

"I shall be delighted to help you in any way," I returned.

"It's settled then. I'll give a small dinner of twelve or fifteen covers; a dance and a supper. But remember, I shall rely on you two to help me until it is all over."

Neither Landry nor I had again mentioned the hospital nor Louisa Lawrence. But I was not at all satisfied. Constantly I had in mind that sentence: "Ask Landry to be kinder to me," and I determined to keep a close watch on both Landry and Louisa. I would question Dwight. He, I was sure, loved Louisa Lawrence, and I was just as sure that love was not returned.

Mother took a good deal of my time and so did the preparation for Homer Carleton's dinner dance. Mother had sort of a low fever. She was up one day and down the next. Margaret and I took turns sitting with her when she felt badly; or reading to her when she was able to listen. The dance was coming on nicely. It necessitated Homer's coming to the house frequently to

consult us; and the day he bought the favors, and ordered the ices and things he took Margaret and me in his high-powered car to the nearest city with him to help select them. It was a wonderful day, clear and cold, and I did so enjoy the ride. For the first time since the day I went to the hospital I forgot Louisa Lawrence, and Landry's infatuation.

We went from place to place to find the favors. Finally we decided upon silk vanity bags with all the fittings for the women and quaint cigar lighters for the men. Then we ordered the cakes and ices, after which Homer insisted that we go to a smart restaurant for luncheon. Oh, I forgot about the flowers. He ordered the most wonderful flowers; all yellow, because I happened to say I thought that a good color for a man's affair.

Our luncheon was delicious. We sat at the table over an hour, and only reached home just as Landry came in.

"Oh, Landry, we had a wonderful day!" Margaret said. Then, "But you look tired. Have you had a hard day?"

"Very! we had a very delicate operation at the hospital, and the result is still in doubt. I shall have to go back immediately after dinner. Did you enjoy your day, too, Sybil?"

"Yes, very much," I answered without animation. Just the mention of the hospital had driven everything else out of my mind.

"You both look better for your outing," Landry resumed. Then, "I stopped at Mother Randolph's and she is feeling fine tonight, better than for several days, so you needn't go over."

"I'll just run over a minute while Annie is getting

the dinner on," Margaret told us, and I proposed going with her. I hated to be left alone with Landry.

We only remained with mother about ten minutes. I kissed her good-night and hurried home.

I went directly into the kitchen.

"Is dinner ready, Annie?" I asked. She had proven a clean, willing maid, but annoyed me because she invariably was late with the meals.

"Yes, ma'am! it is all ready," she told me, so I went upstairs to take off my things. Margaret and I went into the library together to get Landry, and, finding the room in darkness, we concluded he had gone out. But his coat and hat were in the hall, so I went back and switched on the light. There was Landry sound asleep on the couch. He did look tired. The hollows under his eyes were very noticeable; and his face was white and drawn. As I looked a surge of love swept over me, and I bent over and kissed him lightly on the cheek, with no thought that any action of mine might be to blame for his worn, tired looks. He did not stir, so I decided to let him rest, poor dear.

Then came the day of the dinner-dance. Margaret and I were both terribly excited. We each had a new frock, Margaret's a deep rose color, and mine a pale blue and lavender. We felt almost as if it were our party, we had done so much to help Homer.

Landry, Dwight, Margaret and I were among the dinner guests. Most of the others were older, the hostesses to whom Homer was indebted, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence and others.

It all went off wonderfully. The orchestra, engaged for the dance, played soft music in another room. Old Mr. Carleton beamed at the success of his nephew's party. I did not know he could be so agreeable.

Soon after we left the table the rest of the people began to arrive. Dora Lawrence, Claire Adams, and, to my surprise, Dot Chamberlain, who had come on for the party, as had Graham Yorke and Lloyd Masters. Louisa Lawrence was the only one of the old set missing.

Late in the evening Dwight asked me to dance. Here was my chance, I thought, and I quickly consented, though Dwight was a poor dancer and usually I would run from him.

"It's too bad Louisa couldn't come," I ventured after a turn about the room. "Everyone is asking for her."

"I don't wonder she is a favorite," Dwight said solemnly. "She has one of the sweetest natures I have ever known."

"What is the matter with Louisa, Dwight?" I asked as carelessly as possible. "Why is she in the hospital?"

"You should ask Landry, not me. He is the physician of the body; I of the soul," he replied with a streak of that pedantry which always annoyed me.

"But you are in love with her; you can't deny it!" I declared, "and you must have some idea what ails her. Do tell me, Dwight," I coaxed, "Landry won't say a word about his patients, you know."

"Landry and I agree perfectly as to the wisdom of that course, Sybil. Neither a doctor nor a clergyman has any right to discuss his patients."

Just then the music stopped and Homer reminded me that it was getting late, and that I had promised the supper dance, just commencing, to him.

We only danced a moment or two, when Homer asked me to go in with him and look at the supper table. It was perfect and I told him so, and praised his party unstintedly.

Then something happened. Homer turned to me, and taking my hand in both of his he told me how lovely I was, how there never was another woman like me, and a lot of similar things which set my ears ringing so that I only half heard.

"Forgive me," he said very humbly. "I have startled you. "I'll not offend again." Then I realized that I had not spoken the entire time he was declaring his love for me. That I had just stood staring at him.

"Shall we finish out the dance?" he asked, and mutely I laid my hand on his arm.

At supper everyone was very gay, and my preoccupation was unnoticed. Afterward we danced again for an hour. But I avoided my host, and danced with the out-of-town boys, and, just before we broke up, with Landry.

CHAPTER XIII

WE were all late the morning after the party, and Landry had gone when Margaret and I got down. After our breakfast, which was breakfast and luncheon together, Margaret and I walked over to see how mother was and to tell her of the party.

It was after three o'clock when we returned home. In front of the house was a shining roadster.

"I wonder who is calling," I said as we hurried our steps. "I don't recognize the car."

Landry opened the door for us.

"Who is here?" I whispered, motioning toward the car.

"Guess!" he returned, smiling.

"I can't! Do tell me," I urged as I walked toward the living room.

Landry laughed, and took hold of my sleeve.

"Do you like it?" nodding toward the car.

"It's lovely! Why?"

"I thought you'd be pleased. It's ours! I bought it a week ago. But they couldn't deliver it until today."

"I love it!" I cried. Landry had bought a car to please me. The thought heartened me with an exultation to which I long had been a stranger. "What good times we shall have!"

"Don't plan on too many good times," Landry said in a tone that at once dampened my enthusiasm. "I bought the car because it had become a necessity. I cannot afford the time it takes to wait for street cars any longer. Instead of half or three-quarters of an

hour wasted to get to the hospital, I can go in ten or fifteen minutes. And the calls in the country will not be such time-wasting affairs as they have been." Then I suppose he noticed my change of expression as I realized that the car was bought for him, because he needed it, and he added, "But you can go with me whenever you like and I'll teach you to run it."

"Thank you, that will be very nice," I said coldly, while Margaret was examining the car, exclaiming upon its beauty, and trying the seats to see if they were comfortable.

Landry studied me narrowly, his face growing a little grimmer, a little more grave.

"I expected you would be a little more pleased with my surprise," he said as coldly as I myself had spoken.

After Landry had gone over to the office, Margaret said:

"I should think you would be wild with delight to think of having that lovely car!"

"Why should I be especially delighted because Landry has spent his money for something else to keep him away from me? It is only like buying another instrument. I can ride if I make my time fit that of his and his patients; otherwise I can stay at home. I don't see anything to be particularly crazy about!"

"But you can go every day with Landry. He nearly always has either to go to the hospital or out in the country."

It was an unfortunate speech. Of course, he would use the car to get to the hospital, and so have more time to spend with Louisa Lawrence. But I kept my thoughts to myself. I had long ago learned that Margaret took Landry's part in any argument.

"Put on your things and come shopping with me," Dot Chamberlain telephoned.

"Is Dora going?" I asked.

"No! she's gone over to see Louisa."

"All right, I'll be over in a few minutes." I was glad to go as I had some necessary shopping to do. I might also learn something of Louisa.

We shopped for an hour; then stopped in the drug store and had a soda. On the way back I looked in on Mrs. Lawrence a few moments, so that it was almost dusk when I finally reached home. The roadster was in front of the house; so I knew Landry was there.

I unlocked the door with my latch-key, and hearing voices I went directly to the library.

Softly I opened the library door, which stood ajar. What I saw took me so by surprise; stunned me so, that for a moment I stood unable to speak.

Landry stood in the center of the room, his back toward the door. In his arms was Margaret, and he, in tender, soothing words, was trying to still her convulsive weeping.

"There, dear; it will all come out right, I am sure," he said distinctly.

What did he mean? What was it that would come out right? Should I let them know I was there; that I had seen and heard? No, not yet, and carefully I crept back into the hall, leaving the door open.

I felt as if I would go mad. All my previous suspicions as regarded Margaret and Landry returned in full force. I had felt for a long time that Margaret admired Landry more than was usual, but because I saw nothing in his actions to show that it was returned unduly, I

had almost forgotten my fears in the greater ones regarding Louisa.

What kind of a man had I married that he could love two or three women at once?

"There, Margaret, dear; sit down now and I'll get you something to quiet you; then we'll be off!" I heard as I crouched by the door. What did he mean? Were he and Margaret going away together?

I crept backward into a closet just in time. Landry came out and called to Annie to bring him a glass and a spoon. Then he went back into the library, and once more I crept to the door to listen.

"Take this, dear," he said so tenderly that I clenched my hands to keep from screaming.

"Thank you, Landry, you are so good to me," Margaret said, and I saw her arm creep up about his neck as he held the glass, into which he had put some drops, to her lips.

"Who wouldn't be good to you, Margaret, dear?" he returned gently. Then, as he came toward the door, I quietly slipped upstairs.

For a few moments after I reached my room I was too stunned by what I had seen and heard to think rationally. I threw myself in a chair by the window and gazed with unseeing eyes out into the growing darkness. Then all suddenly came the thought. Not only did Margaret care for Landry, as I thought, but Landry was openly, shamelessly making love to Margaret. I clenched my hands in agony. I didn't cry. I felt that I never should cry again. My misery was too deep for tears. Gladly would I have strangled Margaret, or done some other horrible, desperate thing.

But—what was I sitting here moaning for? I must not leave them alone any longer. I crept softly down—

stairs, quietly opened the hall door, then ostentatiously slammed it as though I had just come in.

"Sybil!" Landry called from the library.

"Yes," I answered as lightly as I could though my voice sounded strange, as though it came from a distance.

"Come into the library, dear, we are here."

Even as I walked toward the room I thought of the "we." I trembled so I could scarcely stand. Margaret was lying on the couch, while on the table beside her were the glass and spoon from which I had seen Landry give her the medicine. Landry was studying a time table, and scarcely glanced at me as I entered the room.

"Well, here I am!" I said. "What is it?"

"Read this." Landry handed me the yellow slip everyone hates to receive. The message addressed to Margaret read:

"Mother dangerously ill. Come at once. Father."

"Oh, Margaret, I am so sorry," all my suspicions, all my anger forgotten as I knelt beside the couch and wrapped my arms around my cousin. Then to Landry, "What time can she go?"

"If I take her over to the Junction in the car she can catch the midnight train."

"You lie still," I told her. "I'll pack your things for you." I went into the kitchen and told Annie to make some strong coffee for dinner, and also to put up a nice box of sandwiches for Margaret. There was no dining car on the train she was to take, and it would be almost noon before she arrived home the next day.

Then I went upstairs and commenced to pack her trunk. I had been at work but a few moments when

Margaret came up. She was so pale, her eyes so swollen with weeping, that I immediately felt conscience stricken. I made her sit down in a rocking chair while I worked; and tried to cheer her by telling her that her mother would probably be better by the time she reached home.

"If anything should happen to mother I'll never forgive myself for leaving her, for staying away so long," she said with quivering lips. "Father said she was dangerous, you know."

"But, Margaret, people are often dangerously ill, and still they have recovered."

Just as I finished the packing, and was about to call Landry to strap the trunk, Annie called to us to dinner. Margaret bathed her face and eyes, and we went down.

It was about a half hour's ride to the Junction, but because of bad roads we started about 11 o'clock. It was raining, a cold drizzle which added to our discomfort. Landry tried to encourage Margaret, but she constantly declared that if he were going she would feel some hope. From the very first Margaret had had unbounded confidence in Landry's ability as a physician.

Finally he quieted her by promising that if her mother was no better, and she would let him know immediately so he could arrange for the care of his patients, he would go out in consultation with their home doctor.

Margaret was wonderfully cheered by this promise, and when we left her, after seeing her comfortably cared for on the train, she seemed quite a bit brighter.

The long ride home was a quiet one. Now that Margaret had gone, there recurred with startling vividness the scene I had witnessed in the library. Did even her trouble warrant Landry's affectionate words and ac-

tions? Landry, too, seemed wrapped in his thoughts, and did not notice my silence. I was tempted to tell him what I had seen and heard; then thought better of it. Margaret might come back and if so he would then be on his guard.

Annie had a hot bite ready for us, and we were grateful for it.

"I trust Margaret's mother may not be as ill as the message would indicate," Landry said as we rose from the table. "Go to bed, Sybil. I must run out to Mrs. Lamson's before I turn in," and with what I considered a perfunctory kiss, he left me.

CHAPTER XIV

At breakfast the next morning I said to Landry:

"You didn't really mean that you would go way out to Aunt Ellen's, did you?"

"Certainly; if it were necessary, and would make Margaret more comfortable. You know she herself is still very delicate, though much better than when she came to us. But it would take very little to throw her back again."

"So you would go for her sake, not to help Aunt Ellen?"

"One presupposes the other," he replied as he rose and left the table.

I missed Margaret terribly, especially the first few days. I constantly found myself calling her to come and see something I was doing; or to run over to mother's with me, or to do the thousand and one things we had done together ever since she came to us. Yet running all through the loneliness was a vein of gladness that she was gone. That she was no longer a temptation to Landry.

I knew Landry missed Margaret. He missed her sympathetic understanding and interest in his work. Once or twice he mentioned it, but I was so unresponsive that he did not refer to her helpfulness after the first few days.

She had been gone two days when we received our first message.

"Mother is no worse," she said, "but the doctor gives us little encouragement. I will let you know if there is

any change, or if it is necessary for you to come." She had addressed the message to Landry.

Then a day or two afterward came the second message:

"Mother better. The doctor says she is out of danger if nothing happens."

I was delighted. Not only that Aunt Ellen was better, but that it was not necessary for Landry to go to her. I think he also was pleased because of his own patients whom he hated to leave, and because of his work at the hospital which took more and more of his time and attention.

I had not forgotten that Landry had promised to teach me to run the car, but when I spoke of it he was always either in a hurry or too busy about something else. I complained of this to Homer Carleton one day when he called and he offered to be my teacher. I gladly accepted his offer, and the very next day he came around with his big runabout to give me my first lesson.

"I supposed you were going to use our little car," I said to him.

"No, you may as well learn to run a *real* car while you are about it. Then you'll surely have no trouble with your flivver," he teased.

But I got along famously. I was of rather a mechanical turn of mind and easily comprehended the principal ideas necessary to manage a car. Homer was enthusiastic.

"You're a dandy, Sybil!" he exclaimed as I succeeded in backing, then in turning around. "The doctor will be surprised when he sees how quickly you have taken hold."

"Don't tell him," I pleaded, "not until I can run it

perfectly. I don't believe he would dare tackle this car," and I laughed gleefully.

"No—I scarcely believe he would if what I have seen is a sample of his driving," Homer replied, then promised willingly enough to say nothing until I should give him leave.

"The doctor is so busy at the hospital he will know nothing until I tell him," I said.

"You mean unless some busybody informs him first."

"Oh, no one will care enough to do that."

"Don't be too sure. Horning has its quota of gossips, you know."

But I laughed at him and gave it no further thought. I was too much interested in trying to learn to run the car, too happy to see how well I was getting on to care very much about Mrs. Grundy.

When Homer left it was with the promise to come over again the next day and he came at the appointed time. In a jiffy I bounded into the driver's seat and at an even speed I sent the big racer along. At one place the road made an abrupt curve. I slowed down a little, sounded my horn, then swung round the turn, just missing Landry in his runabout.

"Bully for you, Sybil!" he shouted as we passed, and despite my chagrin that he should know that I was learning until I had shown myself perfect, I couldn't help a throb of pleasure as I heard his approving exclamation.

Suddenly I caught a glimpse of a small figure running across the road. I heard a little frightened cry, and frantically I applied the brake. It all happened in a breath. Homer had jumped out and had lifted the tiny form in his arms.

"Thank God!" I heard him say, "it's only a broken leg."

Quickly he climbed into the car, and, shoving me over, laid his burden on my lap, and took the wheel. The car under his skilful hand seemed to fly over the road, and we were soon at the hospital. The child moaned faintly.

"A private room, quick!" Homer said to the attendant, who came to our aid. "The child's leg is broken."

Just then Landry drove up.

"What is it, Sybil? What's the matter?" he questioned.

"A child—in the road," I answered, my voice trembling.

A gray mist was before my eyes. Suppose I had killed the boy. I struggled desperately to keep my self-control, not to faint.

"You mustn't let him die, Landry! You mustn't!"

"No, dear, he's not going to die," Landry assured me, as he turned from a cursory examination of the little fellow.

After that I was quiet, not willingly, but from sheer weakness. My knees trembled, I could scarcely stand. Some one, a nurse, brought me something in a glass.

"Your husband says you are to drink it," she told me, and obediently I drained the glass.

Then Homer came out. I noticed with wonder that he was smiling.

"It's all right, Sybil. The little chap isn't badly hurt. Just a simple fracture. Jump in and we'll go and reassure his mother. She doesn't know where he is, remember."

My first impulse was to refuse to go. To declare that I would never ride in a motor car again. Then I sum-

moned all my common sense to my aid and quietly stepped in the car just as Landry came out.

"That's right, Sybil. No great damage is done, and it would be too bad for you to lose your nerve just as you were getting along so nicely. That was a great turn you made when you passed me," and he went back to his little patient.

"Sensible man, Doctor Jones," Homer said as we sped back along the road we had just come.

Homer insisted that I remain in the car while he told the boy's mother what had happened. At first she took on dreadfully, but when Homer had assured her that the boy's injuries were slight, and had guaranteed all expenses at the hospital besides giving her a fifty-dollar bill for incidental needs, also his address with the promise of more, she ceased wailing, and made me quite comfortable by declaring:

"I've been expecting it for a long time. I've warned him again and again about running in front of the automobiles, but it wasn't any use. Perhaps now he'll be more careful."

It was nearly a week before I could drive the big racer again, although Landry assured me the boy was coming on finely. Then I drove gingerly, with none of the dash and recklessness which at first I had shown. Yet as the days went by, and each one proved me more skilful in handling the car, my courage returned, and my fear grew fainter until I no longer remembered to be afraid.

Landry had made not the slightest objection to my driving with Homer. In fact, he constantly complimented me upon my skill, and vowed he should have to work hard to afford a car worthy of me—my driving. I was so engaged, so busy that I almost forgot that Louisa

Lawrence was still a patient at the hospital. Almost—not quite.

The weather had become suddenly warm and sultry. Often when Landry was at the hospital in the evening, Homer would come for me and we would race along the smooth country roads seeking a breeze, and not finding one, create it with the help of the eighty-horsepower engine of his machine.

One night soon after we had finished dinner, Landry put on his hat.

“Are you going out?” I asked.

“Yes. I must go over to the hospital.”

“I am so disappointed, Landry, I hoped we would have the evening together.”

“Don’t be foolish, Sybil. You are a doctor’s wife.”

“Do you suppose I ever forget it? I wonder if you quite realize how long it is since we have had an evening together. Not since Margaret went away.”

“You know I would gladly remain with you if it were possible. Don’t be unreasonable, Sybil.”

“Is it so unreasonable for a wife to expect a little of her husband’s attention, even though he is a doctor? It is maddening to be left alone at night, with nothing to think of save that you are closeted with other women. Louisa Lawrence, I suppose.”

“Yes, I shall see Louisa,” Landry returned. Then, “Sybil, this fault-finding, these scenes because of my unavoidable absences must stop. You must trust me. Being closeted, as you call it, with other women is part of my business.”

“Oh, I’ve heard all that before!” I rejoined impatiently. “Shall you be out late?”

“I don’t know. It depends a good deal on how I find

Louisa. Well, I'm off; don't wait up if I am late," and he gave me a hurried little kiss before he left.

I fairly stamped my foot with anger as I turned from him, making no pretense of returning his kiss.

I seldom complained to mother of Landry's "neglect," as I called it. She was very fond of him and thoroughly in sympathy with his work. But after he left I went over to see her for a few moments, and almost immediately began to pour out my grievances.

"I just can't stand it!" I exclaimed, after telling her that Landry was out nearly every evening.

"You knew he would have to attend to his patients when you married him, dear," she replied in her gentle way.

"Yes, but there was no need for him to take up this hospital work, and"—even to mother I could not yet voice my jealousy of Louisa.

"But, daughter, you would not have him stand still. A young professional man either gains or loses; he either goes forward or back. There is no such thing as standing still. Too many are waiting for his chance. Then, dear, Landry is such a clean, wholesome fellow. If he were like some men, you might have cause for complaint. Try to be patient until he gets well established, then he won't have to work so hard."

"It's easy enough to talk that way, Mother, but if you were in my place, and young, you would feel exactly as I do."

"Perhaps; try, dear, to go out more, to cultivate the social instinct. You seem to care so much less for your girl friends than before your marriage. A healthy companionship with girls or women of your own age will be a great help to you. Then why have you given up all the outdoor sports you used to so enjoy? All those

things would keep you from being lonely, or from dwelling on what cannot be avoided."

"But I don't want to do those things; I don't want the girls' society; I want attention from my husband. It is my right!" I stormed.

"There are plenty of men, Sybil, who lack Landry's many good qualities, who are chronically contentious, ready to quarrel over the slightest thing, who are surly and suspicious, ready to take offense, meddlesome and unappreciative. Landry is none of these things. He is kind, appreciative of everything done for his comfort, gives you all and perhaps more latitude than is good for you, and is in every way a manly fellow. And he's brilliant, too. You should be very proud of his success in his profession, instead of finding fault.

"By the way, dear," mother continued, "I heard a little gossip about you motoring so often with Homer Carleton. Nothing much, and, of course, I took no notice of it. But, dear, to avoid the appearance of evil is always the wisest course."

"Landry knows all about it! Homer was only teaching me to drive," I exclaimed indignantly.

"I know, dear, and so does Landry. But there are evil-minded people in every place, and Horning is no exception. Just use a little discretion, dear. Do not go quite so often."

"Well, it is no one's business; and I sha'n't give up my lessons for a lot of gossips."

"I'm not going to say any more, Sybil, but do be careful. I don't like my girl spoken lightly of, even falsely. There comes Landry now!" she exclaimed as he drove up in the runabout.

"Get your hat on, Sybil, and come along," he called as I went out on the porch to see what he wanted. "I

have a call to make over in Salisbury and the ride will do you good. Besides, it is time you learned to run our own car as well as Carleton's."

Salisbury was about ten miles away, a pleasant ride over good roads. I was pleased that he had come for me, yet couldn't help regarding his remark as significant, coming so soon after mother's lecture, as I called it. I drove the car and did it so well that Landry complimented me very highly.

"If I can drive Homer's big racer I should be able to drive this baby affair," I laughingly replied.

"You surely should, but I feel anxious when you are driving that big car of his, Sybil. You know that while he is a good driver, he is also called a very reckless one. He has been arrested for speeding, you remember."

"There's no need for you to worry. Homer says I handle it like a professional."

"Perhaps he flatters a bit, Sybil."

"Perhaps." I did not like the insinuation.

Just then I took the car up to the door of the inn with a flourish, and we went in. The very first persons we saw were Homer Carleton and Dora Lawrence. Homer came over to us and insisted that we dine with them. I could see Landry did not want to, but I thought it would be great fun, so said eagerly that we would be delighted to do so.

Homer ordered, then when he had finished he turned to me and commenced talking, leaving Landry and Dora to themselves. I heard Louisa's name. Immediately I lost all interest in what Homer was saying, and while pretending to listen I strained every nerve to hear what they were saying.

"I am watching closely," Landry replied to some re-

mark of Dora's. "I spend a good part of my time at the hospital with her."

I was furious. It was a pity Landry couldn't forget Louisa, or stop talking of her, even when I was along.

I began at once to laugh and talk excitedly with Homer. I would show Landry that I was attractive to some one even if he did neglect me.

At first Landry didn't appear to notice my forced high spirits, and kept right on talking to Dora. Then as I made an engagement to take a lesson from Homer in the morning he turned and said:

"Don't let her speed in that car of yours, Carleton. She is inclined to be a bit reckless, although I must say she has become quite an expert. She brought us up to the door in great shape."

"I should be very dumb if I could not drive fairly well when Homer has been so wonderfully kind and attentive," I broke in.

"Oh, Sybil's a wonder," Homer added, "and there's no need for you to worry, is there, Sybil?"

During the rest of the dinner I laughed and talked constantly, but there was one thing I could not understand and that was Dora's complacent attitude about Landry's evident admiration for Louisa. "I should think she would be ashamed of herself to talk about her to Landry," I thought as I watched them.

When we left for home Homer laughingly told Landry:

"I'll give you half an hour's start then beat you to it."

"No you won't, because I am going to the hospital before I go home," he returned good-naturedly.

So he was going to see Louisa again. I had all I could do to keep from saying I wouldn't go. But for-

tunately I had pride enough not to make a show of myself. If Landry had made up his mind to go, he would go if he left me at the restaurant all night.

I called a gay good-bye to Homer, almost ignoring Dora.

"That would make a good match," Landry said as we drove along.

"What?" I had forgotten, or rather did not think of Dora and Homer.

"Homer Carleton and Dora Lawrence," he returned. "They are about of an age. Dora has always been accustomed to everything she wanted, and Homer could keep right on giving it to her."

"I don't believe he is at all in love with her," I replied. "He's just nice to her as he is to all the girls. He takes turns taking them out in his car."

"And varies it sometimes by taking married women. I don't see for the life of me how he is much help to the old man. He's never in the office."

"There are people who think there is something in the world besides an office," I returned coldly.

"If he needed money I guess he'd buckle to fast enough. He's a bright fellow, if he is rather sporty."

"I like him!" I declared.

"So I've observed," Landry said dryly, then as was his fashion commenced to talk of something else. Landry never nagged.

CHAPTER XV

"You better come into the waiting room, Sybil," Landry said as I proposed to wait in the car. "I may be some little time."

"It is nine o'clock now," I grumbled, doing as he suggested, however.

"I know, but—yes,"—to a nurse who ran down the hall. "I'll be right there."

I sat down in the waiting room and idly turned the leaves of a magazine. For about an hour I waited, then the nurse came and said:

"Doctor Jones asked me to tell you that he may be obliged to remain all night, and that you better go home. One of the internes will drive you."

"Tell Doctor Jones I wish to see him before I go."

I waited about twenty minutes more, then Landry came hurrying in, and exclaimed hastily:

"What is it, Sybil?"

"I want to know why you will not go home with me?"

"Didn't the nurse tell you I should perhaps be obliged to stay here all night?"

"Yes, but I preferred to hear what you had to say."

"Well, now that you have heard, I'll go back. Doctor Harris (an interne) will drive you home. It is too late for you to go alone."

"I prefer to be alone."

"And I prefer you should have some one with you," he turned to a nurse who beckoned him. "In a moment. Send Doctor Harris here right away."

"Who is so sick that you have to treat me with such

indifference?" I asked as soon as the nurse had left us.

"Louisa Lawrence is very ill. I can't leave her any longer," and without a word more he went down the hall. I was terribly angry.

But I couldn't very well show my anger to an interne, and, perhaps, I might learn something about Louisa from him. I never had been considered particularly tactful, but I determined to be so that night. I would be as pleasant to this young interne as I possibly could. He might be flattered that I, the wife of his superior, should show him such attention and in return tell me things I so wanted to know.

So it was with a smile that I received his announcement that he would be ready in five minutes.

"There is no particular hurry," I told him. "It is a lovely night, as light as day."

"The ride will be a great treat for me," he returned pleasantly, as he hurried away. He was back in less than the five minutes. I insisted on driving, although he claimed that he knew how to manage the car, that he had often taken it to go on some errand for Landry. But I felt I would be more at ease at the wheel.

"Have you much sickness at the hospital?" I asked quietly.

"We have several new cases, yes," he replied. "And some of the old ones are pretty stubborn."

"Some of them have been there a long time, Miss Lawrence, for instance," I said, and slowed down the better to hear his reply.

"Yes," non-committedly.

"She is worse to-night the doctor told me."

"Yes," again the monosyllable.

"Is she dangerous? The doctor was in such a hurry I could not talk to him."

"No—at least I don't think so."

"It's a lovely night, isn't it?" I insinuated the remark in hopes he would be a little less uncommunicative if we became a little more sociable over something other than the hospital. What ailed them all? I wondered. They acted as if afraid to say a word.

"Indeed it is; and as I said, it is a great treat for me."

"And for me. I seldom drive at night," I flattered.

Although I talked pleasantly, almost foolishly, with him all the way home, I elicited nothing of importance concerning Louisa. Finally it was all I could do to keep my temper at his monosyllabic replies whenever I tried to talk of the hospital's affairs. When we drove up to the house I asked him in. I would make him a glass of lemonade and give him some cakes. Perhaps that would make him more willing to talk. But he refused, thanking me graciously for the invitation.

"I must hurry back. I may be needed," he said, and turned immediately away.

As I had feared, Landry did not come home that night, and perhaps it was well that he stayed away. I fretted and fumed until nearly daylight before going to sleep, so slept later than usual. The cosy breakfast Annie served me was most rejuvenating and put me in splendid humor after a wretched night. The first thing I did after my coffee was to telephone Landry.

"He is asleep and cannot be disturbed," was the answer, whereat I flung the receiver into place and was soon on my way down town on a shopping errand. I was away several hours.

When I reached home Landry was there. He was lying down on the couch in the library, and called me:

"Come in here, dear! The house seems terribly lonely when I come in and find that you are out."

"Annie is in the kitchen," I responded, as I leaned over and kissed him, at the same time restraining an impulse to ask him how he thought I felt when he left me alone so much.

"Annie!" he repeated in a disgusted tone as he drew me down beside him. "She may be a perfectly good servant, but when a fellow's all tired out she isn't just the person he would naturally seek."

I laughed at him for a big boy, and then for an hour we talked together more amicably than we had in some time. Perhaps because his work was not mentioned.

"Will Margaret come back, now that her mother is better?" he asked.

"I don't know. She said nothing about it in her last letter."

"You are less lonely when she is here. Why not write and ask her? That climate is bad for her anyway."

"You miss her, don't you? You and she used to talk so much about your work."

"Yes, I do miss her. She is a good soul. Had she been strong enough she would have made a wonderful nurse, or even a physician."

"But you don't believe in women doctors, do you?" I asked, a little jealous feeling creeping in at Landry's praise of Margaret.

"Certainly! that is, if they are mentally and physically fit. Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know. I had an idea that men hated to see women doing such things."

"Get that right out of your little head. Women have proved themselves wonderful surgeons and physicians. Not many of them as yet, but enough to insure them the right to a place in the profession."

"Would you have married a doctor?"

"Yes, if I had loved her, and she would have had me. But you see I happened to love you."

"Would you love me better if I would study hard and become a doctress?"

"No, dear, because I couldn't love you more, and you aren't made of the stuff that they put in doctresses, as you call them."

"What do you mean?" I was nettled that he thought me incapable.

"In the first place you are not strong enough physically. You see how my work takes all my strength, strong as I am. Then you are timid; too easily upset when things go wrong. A doctress shouldn't have any nerves; and a colossal nerve. Then I do not believe a doctress should marry. If she has a family she knows every symptom. She often would worry unnecessarily, and her family life would unavoidably conflict with her professional life. You can't serve two gods, you know."

"Would you like me to ask Margaret to come back?" I asked, recurring to the subject which interested me.

"Why, yes, if you would. I should be happier when I am obliged to remain out late if you had someone with you."

"Very well, I'll write to-morrow and ask her to come."

For a while we were silent. I think Landry dozed. I was trying to make up my mind whether to tell him what I had only a few days before found out myself. I somehow longed; yet hated to. I wonder if every young wife feels that way when the knowledge that she

is to be a mother first comes to her. One moment I thought I would tell him, the next that I would wait a little. I was a bit frightened, a bit terrified by the mystery of it all. Something was to happen to me, something vague, unknown, something I myself must bear. I had intended to tell mother, but I thought it unfair not to tell Landry first.

It would be nice to have Margaret. She was so dependable. I would write her; then tell Landry and mother before she came. My secret should be mine a few days longer I decided as Landry snored in his sleep.

I can't explain the fear that gripped me. It was only the natural thing which I was to undergo. I loved children, I was happy in the thought of motherhood, but still that fear of the unknown appalled me.

I couldn't wait until the next day, I thought as I watched Landry sleeping, I would write now. The more I thought of Margaret, the more I felt she would prove a perfect tower of strength to me. She had such quiet ways, such an understanding of others. Yet at the very moment that I penned the invitation, couching it in the strongest possible terms, I felt the old twinge of jealousy as I thought of the long technical discussions with Landry would once more begin if she came back.

Annie called us to dinner just as I finished the letter. So had I wanted there was no time for confidences that night, as we had scarcely seated ourselves before Landry had a telephone call from a patient out in the country. He would have to start out the moment he finished his dinner.

The next day I told Landry. And never shall I forget the wonderful joy and tender thought for me with which he heard my faltering confession. My face was:

hidden on his shoulder, but he raised it, so letting me see the gladness shining in his eyes, the love for me over all.

He at once commenced to plan for my comfort, all tender solicitude. "Margaret must come," he remarked after a while as we discussed affairs.

A letter came in a few days, and Margaret closely followed the letter. I had told mother, and she hadn't left me alone a moment until Margaret came. Landry greeted Margaret effusively, claiming a cousin's right as he kissed her.

Doctor Holden again became an almost daily visitor. I knew very well, and so did Margaret, judging by her blushes, that he did not come to see Landry, although he always asked for him, and pretended to be disappointed if he were out.

"That will make a match!" Landry said to me.

"It will if he has his way, but I don't think Margaret cares enough. Then she sees how much a doctor's wife is alone, how she is neglected for every one and any one, and I should think it would sicken her."

Landry didn't answer. I realize now that I was rather a difficult proposition at this time.

I hated the very name of the hospital, and again and again urged Landry to sever his connection with it.

"I would do almost anything to please you, Sybil, but that I cannot do. My—our whole future may now depend upon my work there. It would be suicidal for me to think of such a thing as quitting now."

But I was neither satisfied nor appeased by his refusal. Then, too, he again declined to talk of Louisa.

"Is she cured?" I asked.

"She is better—now," he answered.

"Will she have to go to the hospital again?"

"What a child you are, Sybil. Certainly, if it is necessary," and he immediately changed the subject.

One night Doctor Holden and Margaret went to the theater. At first Margaret refused to leave me; then when Landry assured her that he would be home fifteen minutes after they left, and would remain with me all the evening, she consented to go.

I curled up on the couch in the library with a new magazine. It was just eight o'clock when Margaret and Doctor Holden left, it was striking eleven when Landry came in.

I was still in the library feigning absorption in the magazine, although I had not read a word for the last two hours. I had been too busy nursing my grievance. That Landry should deliberately remain out after promising to come directly back was not to be condoned, because he had telephoned and made Annie promise to remain at home with me. I wanted my husband, not a maid.

I longed to sob out my heart in his arms, but his white, drawn face, tired looking as I seldom saw it, deterred me. And as his arms closed around me, and he told me how sorry he was that he couldn't get back, I forgot the long hours alone, and remembered only that I loved him; that he was my man, the father of our coming child.

I now know that the happiness of married people depends almost entirely upon mutual trust and understanding. If we lack these two requisites we must necessarily lack that sympathetic spirit of mutual co-operation without which no marriage is ever a happy one.

Faith in each other, and in each other's love will smooth over almost all rough places; will nearly always result in happiness for both. Marriage at best is a sort of a "take on trust" arrangement. No matter how well

acquainted are a man and a woman they never really know each other until they have lived together.

But I didn't learn all these things until long afterward. That it was a matter of temperament plus adaptation which made for happiness. Had I—well, I should have had no story to tell.

One thing I did, which annoyed both mother and Margaret, but for which they did not blame me, laying everything I now said or did to my condition: I constantly wished that Landry was not a physician, or that he would go into some business. I did not keep these desires to myself, but talked constantly of how happy I should be if Landry were either a broker, a lawyer, or a merchant, so that he wouldn't be obliged—or think he was, to run after every Tom, Dick or Harry who happened to send for him.

I wonder why it is that when one is looking for trouble he always finds it. One day after I had made both mother and myself miserable by my dissatisfaction—Landry had been suddenly called out—I busied myself by looking over some things in a small closet where Landry frequently hung his clothes.

I took down a coat which he had not worn in some time to see if it was out of order. A card dropped out of the pocket. I picked it up. It was a small picture of Louisa Lawrence, taken before she was sick.

The lovely laughing face stared up at me. For a moment I was so incensed I couldn't even think. What business had Landry, my husband, with a picture of Louisa Lawrence? Mother and Margaret started up in alarm when I burst into the living room where they were sewing on dainty little garments.

“What's the matter, Sybil?” Margaret asked, while

mother rose in alarm and put her arm around me, as she too questioned:

"Sybil, dear, what has happened?"

"Oh, enough has happened!" I almost screamed hysterically. "You have laughed at me, both of you, because I have been jealous of Louisa Lawrence. Landry was too good, Louisa was too good, to become anything to each other; Landry loved me too well, and all that rot! well, look at this and see who's right; you or I?" and in a perfect paroxysm of rage, jealousy and despair I threw the picture on the table where they both could see it.

"But what of it? That's an old picture of Louisa. What has upset you so?" mother asked, gently forcing me into a chair.

"I know it is an old picture. It was taken soon after I was married. It shows how long the shameless affair has been going on, and no one would believe me."

"Careful, daughter, you are exciting yourself altogether more than is good for you. Now quietly tell us all about that picture; and why you are so exercised over it."

"I found it in an old coat of Landry's," I said, trying to speak calmly. "I took it down to see if it needed mending—it was an old office coat—and this dropped out of the pocket."

Margaret had not spoken until now.

"Don't you think, Sybil, that it would be only fair to give Landry a chance to explain before condemning him?"

"Margaret is right, daughter. Wait until Landry comes in then ask him to tell you how he happened to have the picture. I am sure there is some perfectly simple explanation."

"You both always stand up for Landry," I burst out. "Neither of you think of me. Here I am only married a little over a year, and my husband is in love with another woman!" I began to sob and cry hysterically.

"I don't believe Landry is in love with any one but you," Margaret said, as she urged me to lie down on the couch. I was trembling like a leaf, and afterwards mother told me she was so frightened she had gone out of the room and told Annie to telephone Landry.

"No, nor I!" mother joined in.

"You would, both of you, if he happened to be your husband instead of mine," I wailed, and nothing they could say or do could stop my sobs or the abandonment of self-pity in which I indulged.

"Thank God!" I heard mother say, and then Landry came hurriedly into the room.

"There, there, dear! cry it out, but try and control yourself all you can," Landry said as he gathered me in his arms, as he would a child. "By and by you can tell me all about it, whatever it is," he said as I started to speak.

For several moments no one spoke. Landry had seated himself in a large rocking chair, and was slowly rocking back and forth, occasionally smoothing my hair, or patting my cheek. Gradually I stopped crying, but the anger to which I had given way had left me so weak that I had no desire to move.

Finally Landry laid me again on the couch and drew up a chair beside me.

"Tell me all about it. Did something frighten you?" he said.

"No—nothing frightened me."

"Then what was it?" and he looked curiously from me to mother and Margaret, as if he expected one of

them to explain. But instead, mother rose, saying:

"Come, Margaret, Sybil will tell Landry more readily if they are alone."

"Now, darling, what is it?" and Landry pressed a kiss on my hot cheek.

"It's that!" I finally replied, pointing toward the table.

"What?" he asked patiently.

"That—that—picture."

"What pic——" he commenced, then breaking off he walked over to the table and picked up the picture of Louisa Lawrence I had thrown there.

Landry held it a moment, looking down on that lovely pictured face while I almost breathlessly watched his expression. Then, the picture still in his hand, he came back to me.

"And why should this cause you to make yourself ill and frighten the rest of us?" he asked gently, but I could see he was surprised and displeased.

"Why shouldn't it?" I parried. "Do you think any wife would like to find the picture of another woman in her husband's pockets; especially of a woman he spends as much time with as you do with Louisa Lawrence?"

"How did you come to find it?" he asked quietly.

"I took your coat off the nail and it fell out," I replied, my suspicions already evaporating, though he had said nothing to cause me to feel I was not right in my surmises.

"And because you happened to see a picture of a patient you took things for granted and wouldn't even wait to find out if there was any reason in your jealousy. 'Oh, ye of little faith.' Will you never learn to trust me, Sybil?"

"No wife would under the circumstances."

"Even a criminal is allowed to defend himself before he is condemned. Yet you condemn me without giving me a chance to explain."

"How *can* you explain that?" I pointed to the picture.

"Easily."

"Then do!" I snapped impatiently.

"When Louisa was first taken so ill she had to be removed to the hospital her mother brought that picture to the hospital with her. She thought perhaps it would please Louisa. Instead, the difference in her looks then and now threw Louisa in a paroxysm of fear that, because she had so changed, she was going to die. Mrs. Lawrence forgot the picture and I feared it would excite Louisa again if she saw it, so I placed it in my pocket, intending to give it to Mrs. Lawrence. Then I forgot all about it."

As I listened it seemed as if a weight had been lifted from my heart. I never thought of doubting Landry's word. He never had stooped to prevarication with me. Often he would not answer my questions, but he was the most truthful person I had ever known.

"You believe me, dear!" he said. But it was a statement, not a question. "I will take the picture to Mrs. Lawrence the next time I go over there. She must have wondered what had become of it." He put it in his pocket.

"Oh, Landry, I was so miserable," I pleaded, and again began to cry, this time softly.

"I know, dear. It's all rubbed off the slate now. We'll never mention it again. But, my dear little wife, if you—we, are ever to be happy you must get over this senseless jealousy. Suppose you give me a promise," he

said more brightly, "suppose you promise to tell me every time you are jealous, and just why. I imagine we could soon disprove any cause."

"But I should feel so foolish," I returned, smiling through my tears.

"We'll try it and see. Perhaps the very fact that it would make you feel foolish would go far toward curing you. Will you promise?"

"I'll try," and that was all I would say. But, in a few moments, when I heard mother and Margaret coming back I threw my arms around Landry's neck and begged him to forgive me.

"It's all forgiven and forgotten," he replied as the door opened. "Come here, Mother, and take care of this naughty girl of ours. I've got to run," and he kissed me fondly before he left the room. I wished I had asked him to stay. It was hard to face mother and Margaret. Neither said anything, but took up their work, and commenced to talk as if nothing had happened.

CHAPTER XVI

THE next day Margaret and I went for a walk. It was a perfect day, and we were chatting gaily as we strolled along. Suddenly, as we rounded a corner, we came face to face with Louisa Lawrence. I was so shocked for a moment I could scarcely speak. She was deathly white, and her eyes looked bigger and darker than ever, though they were frightfully sunken.

"I was just going to your house. Is the doctor at home?" she asked, paying no attention to my belated greeting; nor to Margaret's pleasant remark anent her being at home again.

"Why—no—I don't think so. He wasn't when we left."

"He may be at the office," Margaret volunteered.

"No, he isn't!" Louisa declared almost rudely. "I've tried to get him there."

"We'll walk back to the house with you," I offered. I had no intention of letting her go and find Landry alone. So Margaret and I turned and followed her as she hurried on ahead of us toward the house.

Landry was not at home. I couldn't help but feel a sense of relief when Louisa said she wouldn't wait any longer, and Margaret and I accompanied her to the door.

As we opened the door, however, Landry ran up the steps. I couldn't avoid seeing the look of easement in his face when he saw Louisa.

"I called at the house, but your mother couldn't find a trace of you," he said to her, laughing a little, but

rather nervously. "Jump in the car and I will drive you home."

"But, Doctor, I——"

"We'll talk in the car!" Landry interrupted, almost pushing her toward the curb.

"How terribly Louisa looks," Margaret said after they drove off.

"There is something strange about her. She looks sick, yet lovelier than ever," I returned. "I wonder what she was going to say when Landry stopped her. I could have slapped him."

That night Doctor Holden came to dinner. Landry was called out, and I went upstairs, so leaving Margaret and the doctor alone. When Landry came in I heard happy voices, and much laughter. Then steps on the stairs. I thought it was Landry, and called to him:

"Hurry up, Landry, and tell me what's going on. You three were making a lot of noise."

"It isn't Landry, it's Margaret." There was a queer little catch in her voice.

"What's all the fuss about?" I asked.

"Me," and she blushed furiously.

"You?"

"Yes, I have promised to marry Doctor Holden, and Landry was pleased."

Even now it is impossible for me to describe, to make plain Landry's wonderful tenderness and care for me during the next few weeks. He turned all of his practice which he possibly could over to Doctor Holden, "Warren" we all called him, now that he was engaged to Margaret, and spent his time with me. Even his beloved hospital seemed to be forgotten in his anxiety to keep me cheerful and happy by his presence.

"He will never leave me when baby comes as he did

before," I said to myself as he sat with me hour after hour, reading to me, telling me some laughable story he had heard; in every way catering to my wishes.

Then when my precious baby boy came his love, his tenderness for me did not wane, but trebled. I used to laugh at him for being so careful of me, so insistent that I become strong and well before I tried to take any responsibility of baby, house or anything else.

"You have the nurse and Margaret. Let them attend to everything. There is no need for you to exert yourself."

"You're too silly!" I remember I replied. "I feel as strong and well as can be. Do you realize, Doctor Jones, that your son is two weeks old and has no name?"

We had discussed this subject every day for a week, but could not agree upon what to call our tiny boy. I wanted to name him after his father, but Landry insisted that one of a name in a family was enough.

"It would end by his being called 'Junior' and I would like my son to have a real name," he objected.

Finally we agreed to call him Randolph. Father and mother were delighted, and I, too, thought it a good name for a boy. Randolph Jones had rather a nice sound I decided, as I said it over and over.

Gradually I took my old place in the household. While Margaret was with us we decided that we would not need a nurse, as Annie was so devoted to baby that whenever Margaret and I wanted to go out together she would care for him.

"I think now I'll get back to work!" Landry declared at breakfast.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, Sybil! I have neglected my work shamefully. But you are perfectly all right now, and

Warren has had my patients long enough. I may lose them altogether if I keep away any longer. Warren has very taking ways you know," with a mischievous glance at Margaret.

"But, Landry, you don't mean that you are going to leave me alone again!" I queried, my heart sinking at the thought. I had been so happy, so contented while wrapped about with his love, his constant presence, his unremitting care; that the thought of reverting to the old ways was almost unbearable.

"Alone!" he laughed. "Why, Sybil, you'll never know what it means to be alone again. A baby in the house, Margaret with you; and your father and mother over here every half hour to see their grandson, to say nothing of Dwight and Warren. Why, first thing we know you will be begging all of us to go away somewhere so you can have a little solitude. You don't quite realize yet what a difference a kid makes in a house."

"The darling!" Margaret said musingly.

"But, Landry!" I commenced again, just as the telephone rang. He answered it, and came back with a serious face. Kissed me, then, without giving me time to question him, was gone.

I said nothing more but inwardly I rebelled against the old conditions again arising. Landry seemed to think he had done all his duty by me as soon as I was able to go about as usual.

From the vantage point of my year's experience, I looked back at my fears, my dislike to Landry's profession with a feeling akin to awe. In spite of my love for him, my fears had been realized. I had been unable to keep him beside me; I had been neglected for his profession.

Could I have known that my fears would have been real-

ized, would I have married Landry? This question I often asked myself; and as often could find no answer. I couldn't reason with his baby in my arms. My darling's coming had changed everything in a measure; yet it had not altered my hatred of whatever took Landry from me; or my jealousy.

I felt an uncalled for irritation every time the telephone rang, or an inquiry was made for Landry. This happened but seldom, then only—as a rule—from his older patients. Those who were friends as well as patients.

"Mrs. Lawrence is on the phone, Landry," Margaret remarked, as she came into the dining room. She had stopped to answer the telephone.

"I'll hurry back, but don't wait dinner for me," Landry said carelessly, as he kissed me.

"I suppose it is Louisa again?" I snapped.

I received no answer. Landry was already out in the hall, and a second later the front door closed.

"You knew she was worse again, back in the hospital, didn't you?" Margaret asked, helping herself and me to the soup.

"No! when did she go back?"

"The day Randolph was christened."

"That was the reason Landry went over there that afternoon, I suppose," I replied bitterly. Long ago I had ceased to care what Margaret thought of my jealousy of Louisa. Her engagement to Warren had eliminated most of the feeling I had regarding Landry's pleasure in her society; although when I was too much out of the conversation I still experienced a jealous twinge. Now I realize I was left out only because I showed no particle of interest in Landry's work. He thought me bored, so never offered to discuss anything with me.

We had finished dinner when Landry returned.

"How was Louisa?" I asked.

"About the same." A frown wrinkling his forehead, then passing, as he said with a gay smile: "I've some news for you!"

"What is it? Something good?" I asked.

"I think so. Doctor Ward has accepted a position in a New York hospital, and I have been appointed chief surgeon here in his place."

"How wonderful!" Margaret exclaimed. She had come into the room just in time to hear Landry's news. "I congratulate you, Landry, it must be very gratifying to have such a position given you when you are so young."

"Well, what do you think of it, Sybil?" he asked, turning to me with a smile after he had thanked Margaret.

"It doesn't make any difference what I think. If you had wanted to please me you wouldn't have taken it. But so long as you and Margaret are satisfied, and you have things arranged to be near Louisa Lawrence, I shall have to endure it, I suppose," and, bursting into tears, I left the table.

To be truthful I expected Landry to follow and coax and pet me as he had when I wept before baby came. But I was disappointed. He did no such thing. He simply went right on eating and talking to Margaret, paying absolutely no attention to me, or my tears.

The next day I tried to appear as usual. But Landry was cold and unresponsive. I realize now that his disappointment was most acute at the way I received the news of his promotion. Yet at the same time I thought I had just cause to object.

In the afternoon I proposed to Margaret that we pay

a visit to the hospital. She readily agreed, and we left the baby with Annie and started for the car.

We had gone but a few steps when we met Homer Carleton.

"Where are you two bound for? "

"The hospital," Margaret replied. "Landry has charge over there now, and we are going to pay him a call."

"Is that so! Gee, but you must be proud of the doctor, Mrs. Jones. He's a very young man to hold such a position even in a small country hospital. It makes a fellow feel he's mighty little good in the world."

I remembered what Landry had said about Homer. That he was smart enough, if the necessity existed. He didn't work because he had no incentive.

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, you know," I quoted, as we accepted his invitation to ride to the hospital with him. "Landry hasn't a minute for me nor anything I want to do."

"That's a shame! When you want to do something particularly, just let me know. I'm always on tap," and he gave me a look of open admiration which made me blush furiously although there was only Margaret to see.

"Oh—I meant—that he was too busy—usually—that——" I stammered. Then Homer laughed. I stopped, embarrassed. I had not meant to complain to him or any man. Neither had I intended to give an unsolicited confidence. The words had slipped out because I was hurt and sore.

"Don't apologize. I have known other doctor's wives who felt just as you do. There should be a law against a successful doctor marrying."

"He usually marries before he knows whether he is to be successful or not," Margaret said dryly.

"That's so, but some way I don't blame a woman for kicking when a man is always on call. She must be a pretty strong-minded female or very much in love not to make a fuss."

"And you think I am neither?" I queried.

"Oh, you're in love, all right—yet," was his answer boldly given. "But you're not particularly strong-minded. Now, Miss Margaret would never think of objecting to anything a man had to do in the way of business, would you?"

"She'll have a chance to find out soon," I broke in. "She is going to marry a doctor. She and Warren have decided they can get along nicely together."

"Is that so? I'm awfully glad. Warren is a fine fellow; and you, Miss Margaret, will make an ideal doctor's wife."

"Which I am not," I pouted.

"You are not strong-minded. You're just a woman," he whispered the last under his breath.

I knew Margaret had not heard, yet I was terribly embarrassed. To my relief we just then reached the hospital; and Homer declared his intention of going in with us.

"That is, if you don't object," he said.

Landry was surprised to see us, but evidently pleased. He was not particularly busy for the time being and so took us into the reception room and sat down and chatted with us. I was surprised at the interest Homer showed in the hospital, and in Landry's work. He congratulated him most heartily, and laughingly remarked:

"Horning and its vicinity will not hold you long, I'm

afraid, Doctor, if what I hear of your ability is true. You'll outgrow us just as Doctor Ward did."

"Not for some time," Landry smiled as he responded.

I was wild to ask about Louisa, and was just about to risk it when Homer forestalled me.

"By the way, Doctor, how is Louisa Lawrence? Does she seem to improve? I met her father this morning and he seemed very discouraged about her."

"She is about the same. She will often be better for days at a time. Her parents are devoted to her, and it is a great sorrow to them."

"It's her heart, isn't it? Dora told me so, if I am not mistaken."

Breathlessly I listened for Landry's answer.

"She has a weak heart," and then he immediately changed the subject.

We left in a few moments, my curiosity still unsatisfied, my jealousy rearoused because of what I took to be Landry's unwillingness to talk of his lovely patient.

Next day Landry was out in the country. Warren had a very sick patient and had called him in consultation. I was playing with the baby when Annie called me.

"There's a boy here, ma'am, what won't tell me what he wants."

I laid the baby down and went to the door.

"What is it?" I asked the shock-headed youngster, about twelve years old, who stood twirling his cap.

"Miss Lawrence, the pretty girl what's sick in the hospital, wants to see you," he told me.

"You mean she wants to see the doctor, don't you?"

"No. She said very particular that it was you. I know you are the doctor's wife, because I saw you when you come to the hospital the other day."

"Yes, I am the doctor's wife. Did she tell you what she wanted?"

"No! Just told me to come and tell you to come right over."

"Very well, I'll start at once."

I said nothing to Margaret. I was afraid she would want to accompany me. I simply cautioned Annie to watch baby until I returned; and almost ran to the corner where I caught a car.

When I arrived at the hospital the nurse at once informed me that Doctor Jones was not in.

"I know that!" I answered rather tartly. "I have come to see Miss Lawrence," and without waiting to hear the half-formed objection on her lips, I walked down the hall and into Louisa's room.

She was half asleep, or seemed so. But as I drew up a chair she opened her eyes.

"Thank you for coming, Sybil," she said, raising herself on one arm and looking at me. "I don't know that you can do anything for me, but perhaps he will listen to you."

"He—who?"

"Landry. Won't you beg him to be kinder to me? He is killing me, Sybil, killing me," and she commenced to cry in that quiet, hopeless way I remembered she had once before.

"But I don't understand!"

"There is no need for you to understand. I tell you Landry Jones is killing me; and he could make me the happiest girl on earth. Just look at me and you'll see how I've suffered," and she drew the bedclothes away, the filmy lace nightdress back from her throat, and showed the bones almost pricking through the tender skin. "You see, don't you? He's the only one who can

help me. Won't you beg him to be good to me just once, only once more? Please, Sybil, do this for me."

I sat fairly chained to my chair by the horror of it all. I was to ask Landry, my husband, to be kind to her once more. What did she mean by "once more?" Surely Landry must have made love to her, and she was so in love with him that she had lost all sense of shame and rather than have him give her up she begged me to intercede for her. Why, she must be crazy!

Yes, that was it! She was so in love with Landry she had lost her mind. Without making any reply, without once more looking at her, I rushed out of the room, past the astonished nurse and out of the hospital. I never stopped running until I was in the car for home.

I went into the house like one distracted. I took my precious baby in my arms and rocked him back and forth, wildly telling him that Louisa had gone crazy and that Landry had loved her. Margaret heard me and came downstairs to see what had happened.

"Why, Sybil, what's the matter? Where did you go?" she asked, staring at me.

"Nothing's the matter!" I laughed raucously, "nothing at all." I would tell her nothing. She always took Landry's part. I would bear it all alone. I hugged my baby closer as I recalled that "once more" of Louisa's. "Beg him to be kind to me once more," she had said.

"Yes, there is something the matter," Margaret said, coming over to me. "Won't you tell me, Sybil? You look so wild, so distraught."

"I suppose I should look happy and smiling!" I sneered. "You better take warning and not marry a doctor. You'll suffer for it some day as I do. Landry isn't the only man who can't resist a pretty face," I added.

"You are thinking of Louisa again."

"Never mind of whom I am thinking, it's my affair."

"You are so foolish to worry over that, Sybil. Landry cares nothing for any one but you. I should think his devotion before baby came and afterward would have proved that to you."

"That was just his fear something might happen to baby. Even if it wasn't, do you think a few weeks' devotion will repay for years of neglect? It won't with me."

"Oh, Sybil, if only you had more faith in human nature, Landry in particular, how much happier you would be."

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER a bit Margaret went back upstairs. When I was again alone I tried to reason out a plan of action. For once I would be clever. I would say nothing to Landry of my visit to the hospital, of my suspicions. I would wait and see if Louisa told him I had been there, that she had sent for me. I was not fearful of the nurse telling. Landry was not the type to whom people carry tales.

Landry came in to dinner, bringing Warren with him. I tried to appear as usual, yet realized all the time that I was a little hysterical in my actions. Finally Landry looked keenly at me, and asked:

“Aren’t you well, Sybil? You act so excited. Has anything happened?”

“What could have happened to me? It would be a blessing if something out of the ordinary would happen——” then I caught Margaret looking at me in a peculiar way and changed the subject by proposing:

“Don’t you think we should give a dinner for Margaret and Warren, Landry?”

“Indeed I do!” he answered heartily. “It is the least we can do for them. Give a good one, and invite as many as you care to. We’ll find some one to help Annie cook, and I’ll send a waiter from the club.”

We at once commenced to plan a list of guests, and in the excitement and pleasure of the anticipated party I was forgotten. And I tried—with better success—to keep all that was unusual from my voice and manner.

For two or three days I was a little anxious for fear

that Louisa had told of my visit. But as Landry said nothing I became sure she had not mentioned it. Landry was not disposed to pass over anything connected with his patients. But I took her silence as added proof that there was some sort of an affair between her and Landry, and treated him more coolly than usual. He laid it, I thought, to my feelings against his appointment at the hospital, and resented it too keenly to make any remarks.

We had made out our list of guests. Most of them the young, unmarried boys and girls. Dora Lawrence was among them.

"Should we invite Louisa? Of course, she can't come, but suppose we ask her, it might be a nice thing to do," Margaret said as we were writing the invitations.

"Invite her if you like, but it seems a foolish thing to do; to ask a hospital patient to dinner."

"It will let her know she is not forgotten," Margaret replied.

"Very well, send her an invitation." So Louisa Lawrence was invited to the dinner.

"It would be embarrassing if Louisa should be able to come," Margaret remarked, "we should have an odd number."

"I shouldn't worry about that if I were you," I replied, as I visualized the thin body and the bony neck I had seen.

"Oh, I'm not worrying, I just happened to think of it."

I had made up an elaborate menu for the dinner. We had entertained so little, Landry was so uncertain, that I determined I would show him, as well as our guests, that it was not because I didn't know how to entertain that we did so little for our friends.

For a wonder Landry came home in plenty of time to dress.

The last guest had arrived and we were all seated at the table when I heard an exclamation from Margaret, whose seat faced the door leading into the dining room. I looked up, and scarcely stifled a scream.

"Although I was invited it seems I was not expected," Louisa Lawrence said, looking like a wraith of herself, yet astoundingly lovely.

"Louisa!" Landry was at her side in a moment. "How did you get here?"

"How do guests usually get to a dinner party? In a taxi. Where shall I sit, Sybil?"

Quickly I made a place for her, Landry still standing beside her, talking in low, earnest tones. When the place was ready I said:

"Come Louisa; come, Landry," and though I could see that Landry was worried, anxious, that he could not take his eyes off Louisa, still I flattered myself I did pretty well under the circumstances. To my astonishment, Louisa, the hospital patient, was the life of the dinner.

Louisa had on an evening dress, which I recalled having seen her wear several times. It was of some thin clinging black material, and while it accentuated her thinness, it also threw her unusual beauty into relief, like the background of some exquisite picture.

Her wonderful hair was piled high on her head, and two bright red spots glowed on her cheeks, making more emphatic the wondrous beauty of her eyes. I have seen many beautiful women in my life, but never one so ethereally lovely as was Louisa Lawrence the night of my dinner party.

Landry, it was evident, was very much perturbed, however much he tried not to show it. But I knew by the way he occasionally looked at me that he was fearfully angry.

If the other guests felt anything amiss, they did not show it, and the dinner was a very gay one, Louisa, as I said, being the life of the party. She told delightful stories, parried remarks with witty bonmots, and delicious repartee. I was furiously jealous, but flattered myself I did not show it. I laughed and talked with Homer Carleton and Warren, and rallied Landry because he was so quiet.

I felt that I was very courageous in thus hiding my feelings, and I also felt that I had need of courage. Every few minutes I would catch Landry looking at Louisa with a peculiar expression which I could not understand. Sometimes it seemed like pity; again anger, then admiration. My brain was in a whirl; but I was acquitting myself well, and my pride was soothed by the thought.

When we toasted the bride and groom-to-be, it was Louisa who gave the most clever toast of all; it was Louisa who by a question compelled Landry to agree with it, and repeat it for our delectation. She appeared to lead wherever she wished. Then, after the dinner was over and we repaired to the living room, it was Louisa who played and sang for us; Louisa who proposed we dance—a proposal which I quickly seconded, though Landry had shaken his head. I pretended not to see, and called to Homer and Warren to roll up the rugs.

Louisa led off with Warren, and Landry, of course, had to ask Margaret. I danced with Homer, who declared:

"Your party is a cracking success, Sybil! I didn't know you were such an accomplished hostess."

"You haven't had a chance to know what I could do in that line. Landry has been so busy we have not tried to entertain. But now we are going to do differently."

"Since you are a staid and middle-aged mother of twenty-two, I suppose you feel it your duty to your son," he teased.

"Not entirely," I laughed with him, "but a duty I owe myself."

"You are right! You should have more company, go out more, then you wouldn't be left alone so much," he replied meaningly.

I ignored his remark. I had foolishly made a bid for sympathy the day he took Margaret and me to the hospital, but I wouldn't repeat the blunder. My pride had suffered ever since. Now I was on my guard.

"Margaret will be married soon," I told him, "so what entertaining we do for her will have to be done all in a bunch."

"That will be fine! Please count me in," Homer said just as the music stopped, and Landry left Margaret with Warren and commenced to talk to Louisa.

She was more quiet now, and appeared petulant. I wondered what Landry was saying to her. Quietly I moved a little closer.

"I am surprised at you, Louisa," I heard Landry say.

"A nice welcome from a host," she replied, looking at him through narrowed lids. "If you would be good to me I wouldn't look to any one else. But you are so cruel, so dreadfully cruel," she repeated.

Just then Warren asked me to dance, and I saw Louisa lay her hand on Landry's arm. He evidently was trying to dissuade her, but finally consented to dance. The

room was pretty well crowded when all were dancing, so I saw nothing until I heard Margaret say:

"It's only a faint, I guess; we'll take her into the library," and Warren and Landry lifted Louisa and carried her out of the room.

"Stay with your guests!" Landry whispered as he passed me. And, although I was almost dying with curiosity, I did as he said.

Warren came back in a few moments and reassured us all. Our gayety had received a damper, however, and no one felt like dancing again. Homer, however, yielded to our persuasions and sang for us. He had a magnificently trained baritone voice and he sang, not "The End of a Perfect Day," but *The End of a Perfect Time*.

We became quite hilarious again, and when Louisa came in to bid me good night every one was ready to go. Landry insisted upon taking Louisa home.

"It must be either I or Warren, and as your party was partly for him, of course, it is up to me. I'll be back soon."

I was furious. I saw Margaret watching me and, although my face flushed, I managed to say the last adieux calmly; then to leave her and Warren alone for a few moments, joking them a little as I did so.

A relieved look crossed Margaret's face, but could she have seen me when I reached my room and knew I was alone, she would not have been so content. I fairly tore the dainty gown I had worn into shreds as I ripped it off, regardless of fastenings. Then I flung myself on the bed and held my hands over my mouth to prevent screaming.

Hysterical? Yes. Childish? Of course. But, dear reader, what would you have done under the same circumstances, if you were only twenty-two years old and

loved your husband as jealously as I did Landry? Would you have calmly undressed, calmly gone to bed, calmly closed your eyes and gone to sleep? I think not.

Yet when Landry returned a half hour later and I heard his voice in conversation with Warren and Margaret, then both of them gayly bid Warren good night, I went out in the hall and leaned over the banisters. I, too, called as gayly as they:

“Good night, Warren, did you have a good time?”

“Ripping, Sybil, you certainly are a success as a hostess,” then the door closed and Margaret came upstairs.

“Good night, Sybil,” Margaret stopped and kissed me. “It was sweet of you to give such a party for me. Warren hasn’t said a word except in praise of you ever since you came upstairs. Really, I was almost inclined to be jealous.”

I laughed, yet I remember I felt a little thrill of happiness that Landry should hear me praised. I had made up my mind while talking to Homer Carleton that I would begin to lead a different life; that I would mope at home no longer. So I turned to Landry and said:

“We’ll show them we can do things, won’t we, Landry?”

“Go as far as you like,” he returned; then after bidding Margaret good night, he followed me into our room.

“What was the matter with Louisa?” I asked.

“She fainted,” he replied shortly.

“What made you look so angry when she came?”

“If you had told me you intended to invite her I wouldn’t have allowed it. She is in no condition to attend dinner parties.”

“Why did she come then? I only asked her because

Margaret suggested it; and—because I thought it would please you,” I added.

“If that was your object you failed most signally,” Landry returned, as he prepared for bed. “The next time you ask one of my patients to a party I wish you would consult me.”

“I am sure Louisa didn’t *act* very sick,” I retorted.

“That has nothing to do with it. People do not always act as they feel.”

“Did you take her back to the hospital?”

“No, I took her home.”

“Is she going back?”

“I don’t know! Do stop talking about her and let’s go to bed. I am tired to death and should think you would be.” Then, as if regretting his harsh speech, he added, “Your dinner was a great success, dear. I was very proud of you.”

It was on the end of my tongue to make a sharp retort, then I remembered my decision. I would not provoke him. Perhaps if I were tactful and patient I would be able to untangle the snarl which now seemed too intricate for me to unravel. So I simply said:

“I am glad you were pleased. Every one complimented me and they all acted as if they had a good time. It is a comfort when you do your best to have it appreciated.”

“Your party was most thoroughly appreciated, Sybil. Warren was profuse in his compliments and his thanks. I am very glad he and Margaret have decided to run in double harness. They are exactly suited to each other. All he lacks is push and Margaret will supply that if I am not mistaken. She is inordinately fond of him and as ambitious for him.”

“Well, good night,” I replied sleepily.

I was awakened about four o'clock by the insistent ringing of the telephone. It had been after two when we went to bed, and I had not been long asleep.

"Landry! Landry!" I called, shaking him, "Don't you hear the telephone?"

"What is it, dear?" he asked sleepily, then was immediately fast asleep.

I got up and went down to the telephone. I was wide awake, and if it was nothing important I would let him sleep.

"Hello!" I called.

"I want to speak to Doctor Jones," a voice replied, a voice so agitated I could not place it.

"This is Mrs. Jones. The doctor is very tired and is sleeping. If you will give me your message, I will deliver it."

"This is Mrs. Lawrence, Sybil. Tell the doctor that Louisa is very sick. We cannot rouse her. She may have fainted again. She told me she fainted at the party. Please send him right over, Sybil."

The receiver clicked. She had hung up.

I stood irresolute. Should I call Landry, or should I let him sleep and tell him of Mrs. Lawrence's call in the morning? Then I recalled her agonized voice, and decided to tell him at once. No matter what lay between Landry and Louisa I was sure that dear old Mrs. Lawrence knew nothing of it.

"Landry, Mrs. Lawrence wants you to come directly over there!" I said, shaking him as hard as I could. "She says Louisa is unconscious," I added as he sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"What's that?"

"Mrs. Lawrence says Louisa is unconscious, has

fainted again. She is terribly frightened and wants you to come over right away."

Before I had finished my explanation, Landry was half dressed. He kept mumbling to himself, and I tried to catch what he was saying, but I could make no sense of it.

"I'll be back for breakfast. Don't you get up. Stay in bed till noon," he said, as he kissed me good-bye. "You haven't had an hour's sleep; you'll be sick if you don't get your rest."

Some way his thought for me brought a little comfort. He was at least enough in love with me—or the baby—to want me to keep well. Then I wondered what made Louisa faint at the party, and again at home. Was she so in love with Landry that she could not live a normal life without him? Was it because he had not been "once more" kind to her that she was so ill?

I asked all these questions, but there was no one to answer, and no answer in my mind save the one that Landry had been, or was, in love with her; and that she was so in love with him that in her weakened state she could not hide it—had no desire to hide it, even from me.

I could not go to sleep again. So about six o'clock I put on my bathrobe and slippers, and quietly, so as not to awaken Margaret or the baby, I crept to Annie's room and called her.

"Have breakfast ready at six-thirty for the doctor and me," I told her. "He was called out almost as soon as we went to bed. He will be hungry, so get us a nice breakfast."

"Yes, ma'am," she replied with her usual docility.

Then hurrying back, I took a bath, and had just fin-

ished dressing when I heard the car drive up to the door.

Landry scolded me a little for getting up, yet I could see he was pleased. I waited until he had finished his second cup of coffee before I said anything, then I asked:

"How did you find Louisa?"

"In bad shape. She had no business coming out last night."

"Is she dangerously ill?"

"No—I don't think so. But she is very weak and can endure very little. So much excitement was very bad for her."

"She made more noise and fun than any one here."

"Yes, but that was partly hysterics."

"She didn't act hysterical to me."

"Oh, Sybil, do talk about something else. I won't be questioned." Landry broke in more harshly than he had spoken to me for months. "These corn cakes are delicious. Please ring, I would like some more."

I did as he requested and poured him his third cup of coffee, something almost unheard of for him. He rarely drank over one cup.

"There; I feel better!" he exclaimed, as he rose from the table. "I wish you would, go back to bed, Sybil. You're white as a ghost."

"Perhaps I shall."

"Do, dear. Good-bye," and off he went again.

CHAPTER XVIII

I WONDER if other women will think me heartless and unreasonable or if they will understand my attitude toward my husband, and his patients, or will they think me unworthy in every way? The strange part of it is that my intense love for my husband, my desire to be the source of his happiness complicated matters. I wanted to be all in all to him as he was to me. It may have been selfishness, but if so it was the selfishness of love.

Homer Carleton gave a delightful dinner and dance for Margaret and Warren. He, of course, gave it at his uncle's house. Landry went with me, and made no excuses when invited, which added much to my anticipated pleasure. Frequently he would not accept an invitation save provisionally, and then I would be on tenterhooks until time for the affair because I never knew whether we would really go or not.

We danced until two o'clock, when the party broke up, Warren leaving with Margaret and us.

"You enjoyed yourself to-night, didn't you, Sybil?" Landry said when we were alone.

"Indeed I did, Landry, and mostly because you were so nice to me."

"Am I not always 'nice' as you call it?"

"Yes—in a way. But not like to-night. You seemed glad to be with me. Usually you are so interested in patients that I feel out of everything. Even when you are talking to Margaret I sometimes feel that way."

"You silly child. I realize that you are not particu-

larly interested in the dry theses which do interest Margaret, so I do not intrude them upon you. Anyway you and I have enough to talk about since the baby came without talking business."

It really was astonishing how much we did talk of our small son. Landry was inordinately proud of his bright healthy boy who had not had a day's illness since he came to us.

"Are all babies so good nights?" I asked. "It seems to me, Landry, that most people are always complaining about being kept awake by young babies, and Randolph has made us—rather you—get up only one night since he was born."

"Babies are usually good if they are well, and Randolph is a perfectly healthy child. Naturally if a baby is sick he will cry. It is the only way he has of expressing his feelings."

"I am so glad our baby is a boy."

"So am I, Sybil, but just what drew that remark?"

"Oh, a girl is so unhappy if she thinks the man she loves doesn't love her. A boy has so many other things in his life that he doesn't care so much about love."

"A lot you know about it," Landry laughed. "It's three o'clock; come on to bed."

For some time my affairs moved on as usual, Landry gradually spending more and more of his time at the hospital. That Louisa was not there, but still at home with her mother brought, of course, a modicum of comfort and a certain cessation of jealous thoughts. Yet I knew she was still a patient of Landry, that he saw her whenever he thought she needed attention or her mother asked him to call.

Nearly all of Landry's patients had now accepted Warren as their regular physician, but Louisa abso-

lutely refused to have him called professionally. She insisted upon having Landry.

I tried to be contented, and at times I was. My precious baby took up much of my time; then I had adhered to my determination to entertain and go out more than I had the first year we were married. But when Landry withdrew more and more from me, when he gave all his time, his strength to his work, so that there was little or nothing for me, I rebelled.

You see, when a woman loves a man as I did Landry she keeps right on loving, even through neglect—which is, I think, the hardest thing a woman has to bear. Even brutality does not leave so sore and hurt a spirit as continued neglect, whether purposeful or careless.

I know that Landry's neglect—as I called it—was never purposeful. But it seemed to me neglect, just the same. And often embarrassed me to an extent I am sure he never appreciated.

Often when invited to some affair which I really wanted to attend, but where it was impossible to go unless Landry accompanied me, I would be obliged to say:

"I'll consult Doctor Jones and let you know." Then Landry would say:

"How can I tell whether I can go or not? I don't want you to make any engagements for me a number of days ahead."

"But, Landry, I can't go without you!" I would persist.

"Then you'll have to stay at home or leave the engagement open until the day before," he would reply, taking no thought for my disappointment—or so it seemed to me.

I had often heard and read that making a man jealous would bring him to realize he was neglecting his wife;

but, as Homer Carleton was the only available man I could make use of, and I was a little shy of him and his attentions, as once or twice he had said things which embarrassed me, I did not see how I was to take advantage of what I had heard or read.

Then, too, I loved Landry so completely that I had no room for thought of any one else. Perhaps the time would come—I used to think when I sat at the window watching for him—when I could do it. But not then. So I fretted and worried, was loving and impatient by turns.

Fortunately it was time to commence preparations for Margaret's wedding. She was to be married at our home instead of going back west. There was a good deal of sickness, and no one to take Warren's place. Her father and mother were to come on and remain with mother until after Margaret was married.

It was February, and they were to be married the first week in April. And as Margaret's people had none too much money we were making most of her clothes at home with the help of a cheap dressmaker.

I have said very little of the wonderful love which my baby inspired in me. I was in a continual state of adoration. Yet even so he in no way took Landry's place, in no way took a particle of the love I had given his father. In fact, I think the love I gave the boy increased that I gave the father. I could not disassociate one from the other.

But as I have said, Randolph was a perfectly healthy baby and so took but comparatively little of my time. Then there was mother always at hand to care for him. Father laughingly said he never knew whether he had a wife any more or not. The only thing he was sure of was that Randolph had a grandmother.

I began now to be jealous of Landry for baby's sake as well as my own. What right had hospital patients compared to *my* right? Were my claims and my son's claims to a part of his time, his interest, to be swept aside because of his profession? What right had he to marry me, what right to have a son if he was not to make us first in his life, as he was in ours?

These were selfish musings I now realize, but they were for baby as well as myself.

We were at breakfast. The door bell rang loudly and persistently.

"Some one is in a hurry!" Margaret laughed, as Annie almost dropped a plate of hot cakes she was passing in her lap.

"It's a telegram, sor!" Annie said, as she passed the yellow envelope to Landry. "The boy says will you sign here!" her finger on the soiled page of the messenger's book.

Landry signed, then opened the message.

"What is it?" I asked, as he deliberately read it over twice before looking up.

Margaret had grown white to the lips. She feared her mother was ill again. She told me afterward:

"I could have shaken Landry for being so deliberate! I was sure it was about mother."

"It is from Doctor Ward," Landry finally said, as he folded it and laid it beside his plate.

"What does he want?"

"He wants me to come to New York. He has a very complicated operation to perform and his assistant is ill."

"Are you going?"

"I can't tell until I go over to the hospital. If everything is all right there I'll put Warren in charge and go."

"If he goes, why don't you go, too, Sybil?" Margaret broke in.

"Would you like to go, Sybil?" Landry asked.

"Why, of course."

"I shall have to go on the noon train if I go at all. It won't give you much time to get ready."

"I'll help her!" Margaret volunteered. "Telephone us the minute you know what you are going to do."

"But the baby!" I objected.

"If your mother and I can't take care of him for two days it's a pity," and Margaret pretended to feel almost insulted.

"It seems like taking a second wedding trip, doesn't it, Landry?" I remarked as we were seated in the train.

"It is very nice to have you with me," Landry returned, as he leaned over and laid his arm on mine with a little pat which he affected.

"Not one-half as nice as it is for me to have you all to myself away from those horrid patients," I returned to his amusement.

I enjoyed every minute of that trip to New York. Doctor Ward had sent his automobile to meet us and an apology by the chauffeur because he couldn't come himself. To tell the truth, I was glad. I should have Landry to myself a little longer. We went directly to a new hotel Doctor Ward had recommended. I supposed, of course, Landry would stay with me until we had eaten something. But after he had looked at the room and seen me comfortably installed, he glanced at his watch.

"I must be off!" he exclaimed.

"Aren't you going to have something to eat first?"

"No! you go down in the dining room, or have what you want sent up here. I may not be back for some

time. Don't wait in the hotel for me. Run around in the shops or do anything you like to amuse yourself."

"But Landry! aren't you going to be with me at all?"

"I can't tell, dear, until I see Doctor Ward. I may be obliged to stay in attendance at the hospital almost constantly."

Tears filled my eyes. I had said it was like a second wedding trip, and before we were scarcely arrived I was to be left alone.

"How shall I know when to expect you?" I queried, noting the impatient expression I dreaded cross Landry's face, which, up to this, had been delightfully pleasant.

"I'll be here when I get here!" and Landry, without another word, kissed me and went out.

I had any number of things to get for Margaret, little things to use in the making of her trousseau that we had found it impossible to find in Horning, and the time passed so quickly that I was astonished when I saw that the afternoon was nearly gone. I would hurry back to the hotel and finish my shopping in the morning. Landry would become tired waiting for me.

When I reached my room there was a small white envelope under the door, but no Landry. I did not wait to remove my gloves, but tore open the envelope.

"Doctor Jones telephoned at four-thirty. He said you were to have your dinner, that you were not to wait for him."

I turned the messages over and over, scarcely could I believe that I had read it rightly. I was to have my dinner alone. I was not to wait for him. I would call the hospital and ask him what he meant.

"I want to speak to Doctor Jones," I said, when I

had the number. "He is assisting Doctor Ward. Tell him his wife wishes to speak to him."

I waited what seemed an unnecessary time before I heard a voice on the wire.

"Is this Mrs. Jones?"

"Yes, I wish to speak to Doctor Jones!" I replied impatiently. I was annoyed that I should have been kept waiting so long.

"Doctor Jones asked me to tell you that it was impossible for him to come to the telephone. He will call you later."

"Very well!" and even to myself my voice had a raucous sound.

At the end of another hour, when my patience was completely exhausted, the telephone rang.

"Have your dinner, Sybil! it will be very late when I leave here. You better not sit up for me, either."

"But, Landry, I——"

"I haven't any time to talk. Good-bye," and I heard the click of the receiver as he hung up.

"This is very like a wedding trip," I mused bitterly as I rang for a waiter. I had determined not to dress, but to dine in my room.

As I sat eating my lonely dinner I thought of an expression Landry once had used when we were talking of his profession, his utter devotion to it:

"A physician who doesn't give the best there is in him, uncompromising loyalty to his profession, isn't worthy to belong to it."

"What about loyalty to me, his wife?" I mused. "Was my life to be entirely spoiled by this foolish ideal of his? Was I always to take the second place in his affections because of this devotion he gave people who were nothing to him, could mean nothing to him? The

outlook was not reassuring, but I would not give up without a struggle. He was my husband; he belonged to me, not to a lot of invalids and cripples.

This may sound hard hearted, which I was not, save where Landry was concerned. But in that it touched my life, made me unhappy, I was hard, and daily was growing harder.

I had been so happy on the train. But here I was alone in a hotel room instead of out having a good time with Landry, as did other couples on their occasional visits to New York.

I had nothing to read and commenced to feel sleepy, but stubbornly sat in my chair brooding instead of going to bed, as Landry had suggested.

"What in the world did you sit up for?" I heard, and as I started up in alarm, Landry laughed heartily. "I should think the bed would be more comfortable than that chair," he added, as he bent and kissed me. "But now that you are awake we'll have a little supper sent up here. I am as hungry as a bear."

He rang for a waiter and ordered quite an elaborate supper.

"Hurry it, please!" he said as he slipped the waiter a half-dollar.

Before I could collect myself to ask the questions trembling on my tongue; before I could voice a complaint, Landry started off in a vivid description of the operation Doctor Ward had performed. He said nothing anent his part in it—which was Landry's way.

"If he did it all, I don't see why you stayed!" I remarked sarcastically.

"I assisted, of course! But, Sybil, it is a wonderful thing to be a great surgeon, as is Doctor Ward. That poor fellow had no hope that he would ever walk or see

again, and unless I am mistaken, he will do both. He was in a horrible accident, and everyone thought him mortally hurt. Ward wouldn't agree with the rest and performed an operation which I consider marvelous. It makes no difference to him that the poor fellow is a charity patient, he gave him the same attention, used all the skill at his command, the same as he would had he been a millionaire."

"And you left me alone all day to assist in an operation on a charity patient!"

"Why, of course! Because the man's poor is no reason I should not do all I could to help him. You didn't need me. Doctor Ward and that poor devil did!"

"Come on, Sybil! I'm starving!" Landry said cheerily as soon as the waiter left us. "I don't care if you have had your dinner, you can eat some of this broiled lobster. It looks delicious."

I could not resist his good nature, especially as he said nothing more about his hospital work. He asked more about my purchases, and was seemingly as interested as I was in what I had bought for Margaret. I ate so heartily of the lobster that he made fun of me. I had not seen him so gay in a long time; and almost unconsciously my manner toward him reflected his mood. So we had a very jolly little supper together in spite of my outraged feelings because of what I termed his neglect.

"I shall not be able to go anywhere with you tomorrow. Doctor Ward wants to take me over the hospital; then, too, he has some interesting cases he wishes me to see. My entire day will be taken up in that way. I'm sorry, dear, that you are disappointed. But you know I came on professional business. Please don't look so solemn. It isn't a bit becoming."

CHAPTER XIX

It was nearly one o'clock when Starr Jordan, who had been the best man at our wedding, came for me. I had taken great pains with my toilet. Even if we were from the country I would not show it by my dress. And his first remark justified me.

"The doctor is better natured than I would be. If I had as young and pretty a wife as he has, I wouldn't let her out of my sight!"

"That's a sort of left-handed compliment, isn't it?" I asked, pleased, yet wondering if other men felt so different—were jealous of their wives. Or if Landry knew I loved him so well there was no possible danger in sending me out with a charming fellow like Starr Jordan?

"Where would you like to go?" Starr asked. "Don't be afraid to voice a preference, if you have one. It's all the same to me."

"I'd love to go to Delmonico's. It is a long time since I lunched there."

"Del's it is!" and he called a taxi. On our way up the avenue I asked about Janet Hedler. He had not heard for some time, but she wasn't married yet—I could see he hoped she never would be unless it were to him.

We had a delightfully chatty time at luncheon, and the luncheon itself was delicious. Starr asked me a great many questions about Landry and his work. He praised him unstintedly and said, as did so many others, that he was a wonderful surgeon for so young a man.

Of course, I was flattered. What wife wouldn't be?

At the same time I complained because I was neglected for his patients.

"I used to declare that I never under any circumstances would marry a doctor, and then fell in love with Landry the first time I saw him," I told Starr with a little laugh.

"But it must be great to feel that he can do so much to help humanity," Starr replied. "I think it the greatest profession in the world."

"So does everybody who does not realize what it means to be the wife of a fairly successful physician," I replied, and a little of the bitterness I felt crept into my voice.

"Why, Mrs. Jones, you don't feel that you would have him in any other profession?" Starr asked, sensing the bitterness.

"That has been, always will be, my one regret that Landry did not choose to go into business and leave the medical profession. A doctor has no more business being married than a priest—not so much. His wife and children are absolute nonentities as compared to his profession."

"What a tirade against doctors. Do you know, dear Mrs. Jones, that I think you should be spanked, soundly spanked, for holding such opinions. What would become of all the sick, the cripples, the nervous wrecks, if it were not that scattered through the profession are men like Doctor Ward, and your husband—men who put themselves, their own wishes, even their families, behind what they owe the world. Oh, be proud of having such a husband! Our country needs such men, brave, true and faithful."

I was perfectly astonished to hear gay, society-loving

Starr Jordan talk like this. He saw my surprise, and, changing his tone, remarked:

"Your husband told me to give you a good time and I am scolding you. But even at that I hope my lecture will do you good. You deserve it, I am positive. Now what shall we do this afternoon. A matinee?"

"Please."

"All right! We'll go and see 'The Boomerang,' that is, if that suits you."

"I'd love to see it! I have read several of the criticisms."

I had a delightful afternoon with Starr, and enjoyed the matinee immensely. Afterward we had tea at one of the big hotels, and just as we reached the one at which we were staying, Landry drove up in Doctor Ward's car.

"You must dine with us, Jordan!" he said as he shook hands. "That is, unless you have something more attractive on hand than dining with an old married couple."

"I haven't a thing on for tonight; even if I had, I should be tempted to accept your invitation. But I'm not dressed."

"I sha'n't be, either, so don't let that worry you. We'll all stay just as we are, then no one will be embarrassed."

I thought of my pretty new evening dress and wished I might have worn it, but after Landry's speech I could say nothing. We dined at the hotel, and both Landry and Starr seemed to enjoy themselves very much. I felt sort of left out of things until Landry made a remark that caught my attention.

"Yes, Doctor Ward hinted that something of the sort might happen."

"What might happen?" I asked, as I looked from one to the other.

"Evidently you haven't been listening," Landry replied. "I was just telling Jordan that Doctor Ward had hinted at a possibility that he would need me here in New York."

"Oh!" I ejaculated, so surprised I couldn't say more.

"Would you like it, Mrs. Jones? Living in New York, I mean?" Starr inquired.

A thought of Louisa Lawrence flashed through my mind. If we lived in New York Landry would not be able to see her so often; perhaps not at all.

"Why, yes—I think I should like it," I replied slowly. "Of course, it would mean leaving mother and father, and——"

"But you wouldn't mind that, or anything, so long as Doctor Jones was successful, would you?" he looked keenly at me.

"You mean that nothing else counts?" I remembered our conversation at luncheon.

"Yes, what's the odds where one lives, if success is sure?"

Suddenly there swept over me a feeling that to be away from Horning, to be in New York, was the most desirable thing that could happen. Louisa Lawrence was in love with Landry I was sure; that he cared for her, in a measure, or had cared, I could not doubt. So now I rushed in to dispel any feeling Landry might have that I would object to a change.

"The more I think of it, the more attractive the prospect appears," I said slowly. "Of course, I should miss father and mother and the girls, but I have baby now, so would not be as lonely as before he came. Then, too,

I should probably see fully as much of Landry as I do now."

"More than you'd care to," Landry replied. "It would be a long time before my hospital work would either keep me busy or bring in a sufficient income to live on. I should have to have an office, probably in the house, and do general practice for a long time."

"Then let's come!" I said so heartily that they both laughed.

We took an early train for home the next morning. and father and mother came over to dinner that night.

Of course they knew nothing of our new plans. Landry had asked me to say nothing until then. "We'll tell them all at once and have it over!" he said, as he took baby in his arms and gravely remarked how much he had grown.

"Yes, he has grown remarkably in two days!" Margaret sarcastically remarked. "I don't see that doctors are any more sensible when it comes to their own children than any ordinary mortals."

"He's a fine chap, aren't you, Randolph?" Landry returned, then gave the baby to me, and hurried over to the hospital.

"Where is Louisa Lawrence?" I asked Margaret as soon as he was gone.

"At the hospital again, poor girl. She seems to get worse every time she goes home. I wonder why!" she finished, musingly.

"I'd just like to know what's the matter with her!" I burst out so fiercely that Margaret looked at me in astonishment. "I suppose she knew Landry was coming back today and went back to the hospital so she could see him alone! Well, her time is——" I stopped

suddenly. I was about to tell of the New York project, and Landry had especially requested me not to.

Landry came back from the hospital quite early, but he looked so serious we all questioned him at once:

"Louisa Lawrence is very sick indeed. I shall see her again tonight." With an effort he exerted himself to entertain his guests, until Annie called us to dinner.

I have heard of people being stricken dumb with amazement, and that was the sensation our news, that perhaps we might go to New York, produced.

Of course, the mere announcement was followed by explanations and demands for explanations. Mother turned pale, and father looked grim. I heard mother say something about the baby, and I accused her of caring more for him than she did for me. They all laughed at her, and that relieved the tension somewhat. But I could see that it was not to be so easy a matter to leave as I had at first imagined.

Landry left us almost immediately we had finished dinner.

"It is a woman's duty to go with her husband," mother said, after a bit, "to do everything she can to insure his success and happiness. And it isn't hard when there is love, is it, father?"

"No, dear, nothing is hard where there is love and trust."

Homer Carlton drove up just as Landry was leaving the next day. He went to greet him.

"Glad to see you, Carlton," he said as they shook hands. "I'm just off to the hospital. Come in and keep Sybil company for a while. That is, if you have nothing better to do."

"That would be impossible," Homer replied as he shook hands with me. "I just heard that you are going to leave Horning. I trust it isn't true."

"Sybil will tell you all about it. I must go," and Landry hurried out, leaving me with Homer.

I couldn't help wishing he had remained. I felt a little uneasiness when, with Homer Carlton, had felt it ever since that time when, at the dinner-dance he gave to pay his obligations, he had said that I was lovely, that there never could be another woman so dear to him. I knew that he would never offend again unless I gave him excuse. Yet I knew he cared for me, and I was flattered.

"It's a great little old town if your friends are there, but the loneliest place on earth if you are alone and unacquainted," Homer said.

I realized to an extent that Homer was right when he said that New York was lonely if one were alone; but I never imagined one-half the stark loneliness of a big city to one accustomed to small-town life and small-town friends.

"But I shall have Landry with me so much more than I do here," I explained. "He will have his office in the house."

"I thought most New York physicians had outside offices nowadays."

"Landry says many do, but that he will not be able to afford such an extravagance; not for a long time." I had not quoted Landry correctly; he had said "luxury."

Unbidden a thought came which startled me.

Would I have been happier had I married a man like Homer Carleton. I flushed and trembled at the bare idea of living with anyone but Landry. I felt that the thought had made me untrue to him.

Then my mind reverted to Landry's praise of Margaret. Could it be possible that he regretted having married me because I cared nothing for his dry books,

his patients? No, I decided. It was as he had said. With him it made no difference. I counted for nothing in his professional life. He didn't consider me. As against his success I was nothing. A glimmer of something came over me that had I been like Margaret I myself might have been happier, less discontented, less miserable because of my jealousy.

But I should have no cause for jealousy in New York. There Landry would be with me the greater part of the day. I would take my sewing and sit in his office with him. And when he wasn't busy we could have little Randolph also. It seemed to me that I should then be the happiest woman in the world. To have Landry all to myself; to know where he was and with whom. Yes, I would urge him to accept Doctor Ward's offer and go to New York.

"I have decided that I want to live in New York," I told Landry a few minutes later when he came in.

"Has Homer been telling you it will be one round of gaiety?" Landry never took Homer very seriously.

"No, indeed! To listen to him one would think it a morgue."

"Well, what decided you then?"

"Oh, just thoughts."

"We haven't gone yet, Sybil, though something came up this afternoon which has about decided me. I had a very urgent letter from Doctor Ward. He wishes an answer at once, even though our departure may be delayed. I shouldn't think of leaving until Warren had taken a good hold over at the hospital. It wouldn't be fair to him or the directors."

"Have you told him he could have the house?"

"No; and you shall tell them. Your plan is a very unselfish one, and you shall have the credit."

CHAPTER XX

A DAY or two after I had told Warren and Margaret they could have the house if we went to New York, I overheard a conversation between them which disturbed and annoyed me. I had been to market, and came in the side door, so they hadn't heard me.

"I'm afraid for Sybil," Margaret said.

"Just why?" Warren asked.

"She is so jealous of Landry, of his work as well as of his patients. She has no idea but that she will be free from any cause in New York, simply because she knows he will be in the house, have his office there. You know as well as I do, Warren, that New York women are fascinating, much more so than small-town women. I don't mean that Landry will for a moment see it; he is too much absorbed in his work; but Sybil will sense it, their attraction, and will not believe it does not appeal to Landry."

"Don't cross bridges, dear."

"But, Warren, I am really worried. Sybil worships Landry, and she will not see that he thinks of nothing but his profession, her, and that boy."

"She is jealous of Louisa Lawrence, isn't she, Margaret?"

"Yes, the poor girl. I mean Louisa, not Sybil. I could shake her for the way she acts toward Louisa. I'm sure Landry never gives her a thought, save professionally, although he is sorry for her."

I had deliberately listened to a conversation not meant for my ears for the second time in my life. But I justi-

fied myself, because of my desire to know if they would say anything about Louisa Lawrence. How I wished I hadn't listened. So the New York women were so fascinating I would be more unhappy than in Horning! Well, I'd show them they were mistaken. Landry would be with me all the time, and I would have no cause to wonder—as I did now—what he was doing in the long hours he spent away from me. No, I would risk the fascinations of the New York women.

"Why not wait until fall?" nearly everyone asked. Then they would tell us that New York was hot, that neither the baby nor I could endure it. We had but one answer to all these objections. Landry must go then or not at all. He must become accustomed to his hospital duties before Doctor Ward could go on a much-needed vacation.

"Sybil need not go until fall," Landry had said at first. But I had been so strenuous in my warning not to make such a remark to anyone that he said no more about my remaining in Horning until fall.

"Nothing in the world would make me stay here without you!" I told him. "I should die!" and, while it may sound exaggerated, I really felt that a separation from Landry for any length of time would be more than I could endure.

He sold our roadster. When I objected he said to me:

"It will be a long time before we can afford a car in New York. Here we have no garage charges and I can tinker the car up myself when necessary; but it costs like the dickens to keep a car in that big town. I asked Doctor Ward some questions with the idea of shipping the car on to use in New York. We shall have to find a house near enough the hospital so that I won't waste too much time going back and forth. But I

imagine we shall have no trouble. I have three real estate agents on the job. Doctor Ward gave me their names and I wrote them about what we should require. One or the other of them will be sure to have something. I limited them to so many blocks from the hospital. It is in a very nice location. Too good for my pocketbook, I am afraid. Anything they find suitable for a doctor in the prescribed limit will do."

As usual, Landry was thinking more of his profession than of me. As long as the house was "suitable for a doctor," that was all he cared about it. An angry reply was on my lips, but I refrained from voicing it. I should be able to keep him with me more easily if the house were convenient for him.

My aunt, Margaret's mother, was in rather straitened circumstances, and, although mother wanted to give Margaret a wedding such as she had given me, Aunt Ellen would not consider it, neither would Margaret. So we had to be content to let her have a very quiet wedding.

She was to be married in the little church where Felice and I had both been married, and Old Doctor Shirley, the same rector, was to marry them. She was to wear her traveling dress, a dark rose suit, with a small toque to match.

Landry and I stood up with her, and the only guests were the young people of the town whom Margaret herself had invited by telephone.

Really, I wouldn't have believed so simple an affair could be so enjoyable. Even the breakfast was of the most unassuming kind. But everyone was so gay; Warren and Margaret seemed so perfectly at ease and so happy that everyone voted it the nicest wedding they ever had attended.

"One would think they had been married a year!" Claire Adams said as Homer Carleton took them to the station in his big car. He had insisted upon being chauffeur to the bride and groom.

"The nearest I shall ever come to being married myself," he joked.

"They are thoroughly congenial," Landry had replied to Claire's remark. "I never saw two people whose ideas were more in harmony."

As always, I hated to hear Landry praise anyone, even my own cousin. So I broke in:

"People think opposites are more apt to get along——"

"That's an exploded theory, I believe," said Robert Huber, who now was rather a grave, quiet young man.

"Of course, it is!" Dora chimed in; "how are people to live happily together if one is pulling one way, and the other an opposite way? It's all nonsense."

As the girls were leaving—Homer was to take all the guests home—Dora Lawrence whispered to me:

"Come over to the house some day soon. Louisa is home and wants to see you."

After the gay quartette drove away I tried to decide what Louisa could want of me. She had not been asked to the wedding, as Landry had especially requested we should not invite her.

"She is altogether unfit for social affairs," he had said, "but if you invite her she is apt to do as she did before and come."

Finally I stopped thinking about it—not about her sending for me; that constantly obtruded; but about whether I should go to her or not. It was impossible to go that day, and I would wait at least until tomorrow to make any decision.

The next morning I woke with a wretched headache. I lay quietly for a few moments, wondering what it was I had to decide that day. Suddenly it flashed over me—Dora Lawrence's message from Louisa. I had been very tired the night before and had slept so soundly that I could not at first collect my thoughts. But how could I go anywhere with such a raging headache?

I would remain in bed until my head felt better. But when Annie brought my coffee she told me that someone was calling on the telephone.

"And, ma'am, it's not a word I can make out they're sayin'!" she complained.

I slipped on a wrapper and ran out into the hall.

"Hello!" I called, and when central answered, I asked: "Is anyone calling Doctor Jones?"

"Yes—hold the phone—New York is on the wire." Then, after countless "Hellos," a man's voice answered:

"Is this Dr. Landry Jones's residence?"

"Yes——"

"Put the doctor on the wire, please!"

"The doctor is out. This is Mrs. Jones. If you will leave your message I will deliver it as soon as he comes in."

"Tell him to come to New York at once! Doctor Ward has met with an accident and wants him to come immediately!"

"Very well, I'll tell him," and I turned from the receiver, headache gone, thoughts of Louisa even, overshadowed by the thought that Landry was apt to go to New York and leave me.

About half an hour afterward he came in. Even now, after all this time has passed, I find myself blushing when I remember that I made no slightest effort to locate him.

"I thought I'd let you sleep this morning," he said as he greeted me. "You looked very tired last night." Then, "Any messages?"

"Yes, Doctor Ward has had some sort of an accident and they want you to come to New York at once!"

"What! Doctor Ward, an accident!" Landry exclaimed. He was usually so calm under any sort of stress that I was astonished.

"Yes, that's what the man said,"

"Get me a time-table, quick!" he said as he began throwing some clothes into his bag. "Yes, there's a train in a few minutes. Call Doctor Harris at the hospital!" he ordered, without looking up.

When I had Doctor Harris on the wire, he took the receiver from me.

"Hello, Harris! this is Doctor Jones! I am suddenly called to New York. May be back in the morning. Can you manage until I get back?" Then, as he turned from the telephone, he said impatiently:

"Just my luck to have Warren away! I hope nothing happens. I don't feel entirely safe leaving Harris in charge even for a day. No other physician here in town either. If you get a call about anyone who is very ill you will have to call Harris and have him send one of the internes. It is the best I can do," and with a quick kiss he was gone.

He had been gone about half an hour when once more the telephone rang. There had been a bad automobile accident on the outskirts of the town, and he was needed at once. I called Doctor Harris and turned the call over to him. I was not yet fully dressed, and wondered if I should be allowed time to put on my clothes before something else happened.

I was not.

I heard the front doorbell ring and Annie talking in the hall. I looked over the banister and when I saw my early caller was Dora Lawrence, I asked her to come up while I finished dressing.

"You can also answer the telephone if it rings again," I told her after I had explained that Landry had been called in such a hurry I had no time to do anything but assist him.

"Louisa wants you to come over this morning," Dora said in excuse for her early visit. "She insisted that I come for you."

"But I can't leave the house, Dora! Landry made me promise I would not, even for a minute. He has had to leave everything to that young Doctor Harris, and is worried for fear he will not be capable. If Warren had been here it would have been all right; but as it is Landry never would forgive me if I left the house until he returns."

"When will he be back?"

"Tomorrow! He can't stay away any longer."

"Then I'll tell Louisa you'll come over some time tomorrow!"

"Yes—tell her I'll come some time tomorrow!" I repeated, "probably late in the afternoon."

Landry returned the next morning. Had he not, I certainly should have been tempted to shut the house and go over to mother's. It seemed to me that there was not a moment of the day that someone did not want him. Once it flashed over my mind that, when he was in New York permanently, they would have to get along without him, and I wondered if they could?

He rushed into the house; snatched a bite and a bath, then left for the hospital. While he was drinking his coffee, I told him of all that had happened the day

before. That is, all but Dora Lawrence's visit. Of that I said nothing.

Soon after he left I put on my things and told Annie I was going to market and might also make a morning call, but that I would be at home for luncheon. I slowly made my way down the main street, and rang the bell of the Lawrence mansion; one of the most imposing in town.

"Mrs. Lawrence and Miss Dora are out," the trim maid told me.

"Is Miss Louisa able to see anyone?" I asked. "If she is, will you find out if she would like to see me?" Something kept me from letting the maid know Louisa had sent for me.

The maid was gone but a moment.

"Miss Louisa will see you," she told me, and at once led me to the invalid's room.

Louisa was still in bed.

"So you finally decided to come, did you?" she said, in greeting.

"I came as soon as I could, Louisa!" I replied. "You know, Landry was called to New York yesterday, and I couldn't leave the house."

"How do you like being a doctor's wife?" This time the sneer was very evident. "You used to say that you'd never marry a doctor, if you were an old maid all your life. Poor Landry, I'm sorry for him."

"You have no reason to pity Landry!" I flared, then, as I looked at the lovely thin face, the pinched features, the hollow eyes, my anger left me. And a sort of pity for the broken girl came in its stead.

"Oh, haven't I? Perhaps I know more than you think I do! Now get me that bottle out of the closet," and she pointed with a thin finger. ~

I opened the closet door and handed her a bottle. When she loosened the cork the smell of whisky pervaded the room. There was a glass on a stand beside the bed, and she poured out a generous drink and gulped it hastily.

"Have one?" she asked, as she poured herself another, and this time drank more slowly.

"I never drink anything unless I am ill," I replied, "and, Louisa, is it good for you to drink so much of that——"

"Of course it is—now. A lot you care what I do or how soon I am out of the way! You are a nice wife for a man like Landry to have; you aren't fit to blacken his shoes, with all your suspicions and——"

"Some of them warranted," I broke in, unable to keep still.

"If you mean me, that I care for Landry, you are right! I do, I love him as you never could, you selfish, cold-blooded creature! I should be so proud of him; it wouldn't make any difference if he only spoke to me once a week, I should think myself the happiest being on earth to have won him. And he never looks at me, but is crazy in love with a weak-kneed creature like you, who thinks of nothing but herself." As she finished she poured another drink and threw it down without taking the glass away. "Yes, look shocked! I'm a drunkard and a dope! But if I had been loved by a good man like Landry I wouldn't have been. And he's cruel to me," she commenced to whimper. "I only ask him for a little, when I can't go on any longer, and he won't give it to me; and you never tried to help me! You remember that time I asked you to beg Landry to be kind to me?"

I remembered only too well; but I only nodded my head in assent, I couldn't speak.

"Well, I got it all right! and I'll get it again, though everyone is in league against me. I've found a way! And if I don't get it, you'll get me some, won't you, Sybil? You used to care for me, and you wouldn't see me suffer when Landry has quantities of the stuff and you could get it without his knowledge. Promise you'll get it if Larry Munson fails me. And, Sybil, you better be pretty nice to Landry. Someone will surely take him away from you, and serve you right!" she finished, reverting to her former manner. "Oh, you needn't draw away from me. I couldn't hurt you—if I tried," and she held up a thin, emaciated arm for my inspection. "Have a drink; it will do you good," she bantered with leering eyes.

I was frozen with horror, yet through all ran the words Louisa had just uttered:

"Landry is crazy in love with you!"

Everything else receded before that admission. Really nothing counted save that fact. That Louisa loved him I never had doubted, so there was nothing to startle me in her confession except the bald way in which she put it.

"Well, what are you thinking about?" and Louisa's lips curled in derision as she asked the question. "I'll bet I can tell you! You are thinking of what I said about Landry loving you! Aren't you?" she asked.

So uncannily had she read my thoughts that I was moved to reply:

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said! You have been worrying for fear I had stolen Landry's love from you! I could have perhaps, if I could have given up certain things.

Now it is too late. And, Sybil, in return for the way I have eased your mind about Landry, you'll be good to me, won't you?" again she had changed to the whining, wheedling invalid.

"What is it you want me to do, Louisa?" I asked, a great pity suddenly filled my heart; all the dislike and jealousy I had felt so long suddenly gone.

"Just some medicine, Sybil. You know where Landry keeps his drugs, and you can get it for me without disturbing anyone. I need it so, Sybil. That's the reason I have to keep drinking this——" she finished cunningly as she poured more of the liquor in the glass.

"You mustn't drink any more, Louisa. What will Landry and your mother say when they find it out?"

"I'll tell you something, Sybil. Mother and Dora have both grown so cruel. They won't give me the tiniest bit of anything to ease my pain. Dora is jealous of me, you know. I am the beauty of the family—was, I mean. That's one reason I like being in the hospital. Larry Munson will do anything for me. Here at home no one cares what becomes of me."

I knew that Louisa's father and mother, as well as Dora, idolized the lovely girl, and her rambling remarks I laid to the liquor she had drunk instead of the hallucination of a diseased mind.

"But how does Larry get the medicine unless Landry gives it to him?"

A cunning look came into her eyes, and she laughed a short gleeful laugh, which made me shudder at the unnatural appearance she made.

"Oh, boys like him will do anything for money! Look, Sybil!" and, drawing away her sleeve, she showed me her arm all blotched with pricks from a needle. For the first time I dimly grasped what ailed Louisa

Lawrence; why Landry was so solicitous; why her father and mother and Dora were so sad and discouraged over her. She was a morphine fiend.

"You've guessed it!" she said, surmising my thoughts; then a raucous laugh made me start. "And do you know why I did it? Do you want to know? Well, when I was sick two years ago and went to New York to be operated upon, the doctor gave me morphine to stop the awful pains. He gave me all I asked for. He was in love with me, and didn't like to see me suffer. Well, whenever I felt pain afterward I took a little—never mind how I got it! That's none of your business," she said harshly, her mood changing again. "But Landry found out I took it, and he tried to cure me. That was when I first went to the hospital."

"Does Landry know this, too?" I asked, pointing to the bottle.

"Of course! When I can't get the other I'd die if it wasn't for that!" She made a gesture of repugnance. "They try to keep it from me, but I'm too smart for them. I'm in the mood for confession, Sybil, and you've got to listen," she went on as I made a motion to rise. I had stood about all I could.

"You see, I cared for Landry the first time I saw him; and I knew you weren't fitted to be his wife. It made me bitter, and I took—things to make me forget. Then when I went to the hospital I learned to love him. Love him in a way you could never dream of loving! When I thought of him with all his bigness; all his wonderful cleverness; all his ambitions, tied to a jealous woman with a little mind, it made me wild. I don't wonder you wince! The truth isn't pleasant, is it? But, you see, Landry cared nothing for me, less than nothing. I was a poor sick patient who needed his skill to heal me.

That was all. Then when I remembered that my love was hopeless, I took more and more of the drug to help me endure the thought that I never could have him; to help me forget he was tied to you."

"Oh, Louisa, don't talk so! You don't know what you are saying." I broke in at last, stung into a reply.

"Oh, yes I do! And I'll tell you one thing, Sybil Jones—if you're not careful you'll lose Landry in spite of his love for you. A man will not be accused for nothing forever. He'll some day have the game if you give him the name." She fell back on the pillows exhausted.

"We are going away, Louisa. To New York."

When I told her this she sat up again and looked at me with eyes which held something very like pity in their depths.

"And you think you will have no cause of jealousy there?" she asked, in a withering tone of contempt. "You poor little fool! you imagine because you take him away from me you will keep him to yourself. Well, you won't! I have been in a big hospital in New York. I know the temptations that young, good-looking, clever men like Landry have. I know that the New York women who visit the private offices of the popular doctors are fascinating creatures compared to us country girls. Why, when you go to New York your troubles will have only just begun. It will serve you right. You never have appreciated Landry, never will—unless something gives you such a jolt that it nearly kills you." She stopped, out of breath with her vehement talk and gestures. I got up, this time with determination. No matter if Louisa was sick, she had no right to put such things into my mind; to spoil all my pleasure in going to New York by her insinuations.

"You'll get me some morphine, won't you, Sybil?" she coaxed as I said I must go.

"I——"

"Don't tell me you won't! don't you make any excuses! I will have it, I tell you!" Suddenly she grew quiet. I noticed the cunning look return to her face, just as I heard Dora's voice calling to the maid.

Never before in my life had I felt such a sense of relief.

"Quick! put that bottle back!" Louisa exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, and I had scarcely obeyed when her mother came into the room, an anxious look on her face, which was quickly dispelled when she saw me.

"I am so glad you were with Louisa. Dora had to go to the dentist, and she is very cowardly, so I went with her. But we hate to leave Louisa alone, even for a short time. How are you, dear?" and leaning over the bed she kissed Louisa tenderly.

"I'm all right, mother. Sybil and I have had such a nice chat. Haven't we, Sybil?"

"I must be going, now that your mother is back," I said, without replying. And then hurried from the house, and almost ran home.

Landry was eating his luncheon.

"I couldn't wait for you, dear! Those people who were injured in the motor accident while I was away are more seriously hurt than we thought at first. One of them will have to be operated upon, I am afraid. But what has happened! You are panting, yet you look as if you had seen a ghost, and it is broad daylight, too," he finished lightly, as he got up and took hold of my hands which trembled in his grasp.

"What is it, Sybil? What has happened?" He fairly pushed me into a chair.

"Louisa sent for me, and——" I commenced to cry.

"What did she say to you to upset you like this?"

I told Landry the whole story from beginning to end—all but what Louisa had said about New York. That I would keep to myself. I didn't believe her anyway. She hated me because Landry loved me, and was trying to make me unhappy.

"You never must attempt to get any morphine for her, Sybil," he said after he had quietly listened to my recital. "Never allow anyone to persuade you to meddle with my cabinet. As for her talk about caring for me, that is but a notion of a diseased brain. You say she took four drinks of whisky while you were with her?"

"Yes."

"I do wish they could find some way to keep the stuff away from her. I suppose she hires the servants to bring it in. And you say Larry Munson has been getting morphine for her! I'll see that he gets no more. It's disgraceful that a druggist will sell a boy like that dope. His father will have to take him in hand. It would be better for Louisa if her people would take her allowance. As long as she is so plentifully supplied with money she will find someone unscrupulous enough to get the stuff for her. I am almost discouraged about her."

"But you don't love her, Landry?" I asked, longing to hear a denial from his lips. "I have suffered so, dear, because of your secrecy in regard to her. Don't you see how much better it would have been if you had told me all about her; then I shouldn't have been suspicious."

"No, Sybil. And I hope you'll not mention what you know to a soul. Not even to your mother. I have

not given up the hope of yet seeing Louisa Lawrence cured. And, in view of what you have told me, I think perhaps Warren can do more, or as much as I could. Poor girl, it is very sad for her and for the rest of them. It is a great pity that a medicine which is in many cases such a benefit, such a blessing, should be distorted in its use until it becomes a curse."

After Landry left me, while I was busy over the packing now nearly done, I thought of nothing but Louisa. All the animosity I had felt was gone; all the jealousy. What a terrible thing to be the slave of anything as she was. A drunkard, too! It was too awful. Mother came over to help me, and, had it not been for Landry's caution, I should have told her. It would have been a relief. I did say I had been over there and had seen Louisa.

"Poor girl; how is she?" mother asked. Then, not waiting, "Dwight talked with me the other night. If Louisa gets well, and will have him, he wants to marry her."

"He'll never marry her," I replied with a shudder.

"You think she'll not get well?"

"I'm sure of it; she can't!"

"All things are possible," mother quoted.

The days fairly flew by. Everyone we knew wanted to do something for us before we left, but Landry absolutely refused to be coaxed away from his work.

"There are too many tangled ends to get into shape, and now that Warren is back, I have so much to tell him that it is necessary he should know that I haven't a minute for social affairs. You go and have a good time, but make my excuses."

As can be imagined, such talk made me the more anxious to get away; the more positive that a doctor's

wife had to put up with a great deal, and that his profession was a rival of whom she had every right to be jealous.

Warren and Landry were constantly together; but when I grumbled, Margaret only smiled, and went on with whatever she was doing. She was delighted that Warren had such an opening as Landry's absence would make for him; yet she really felt badly that we were leaving town.

"Such conflicting emotions," she laughed. "If you weren't going, Warren wouldn't have half the chance he now will; but because you are going we shall both be very lonely."

"You'll be lonely enough!" I replied, "although I don't imagine Warren will. After I am gone and you spend days and nights alone, you'll remember what I told you! A doctor's wife hasn't any picnic. You'll find out soon enough. That is, if you care anything about Warren."

"Care!" said Margaret. "Why, Sybil, I care so much that I will willingly stay alone, do anything that will advance him; make him successful and happy. I did not know anyone could care so much as I do," she said softly.

"I never did understand you, Margaret. I guess I never will. But I think that when a man marries a woman he should give her his time, at least a certain part of it. If I had a daughter I'd never let her marry a doctor! Never!"

"Yet you did!"

"I know. And I would have married Landry if he were a hostler. But it isn't the thing to do, and if Landry only would go into business."

"Still talking that nonsense, Sybil," Margaret

laughed. "Landry will never be anything but the only thing he has any right to be—a physician."

I had not seen Louisa again, although I had called at the house to say good-bye to Mrs. Lawrence and Dora. They neither of them suggested it, for which I was thankful. Just as I left, however, I said:

"Say good-bye to Louisa for me. I hope she will be better soon."

"Thank you," Dora replied very gravely. "She was extremely nervous this morning, so we did not suggest you see her. She dreads having Doctor Jones leave her. She has the natural dislike of invalids to a new doctor."

It was more than the natural dislike to a new doctor that made Louisa hate to have Landry leave Horning. But, of course, her family knew nothing of her feelings for him.

We spent the evening with father and mother.

"Oh, I do hope no one wants Landry!" I exclaimed, as father answered the telephone.

"Landry! Someone for you!" he called.

"Oh, can't they let him alone just this last evening!" I burst out.

"Sh—h, dear!" mother said, holding up a warning finger. "Landry won't be able to hear if you talk so loudly."

"Yes—yes—that's right—if there's any change call me——" and Landry returned and picked up his cards.

"It's that child of Ben Brokaw's," he said to Warren. "He has scarlet fever. If they call again perhaps you better take the case, as you'll have it anyway."

"All right!" Warren answered, and then we all became again interested in the game.

Once more the telephone rang. This time Landry

answered, and I waited in my task of picking up and sorting the cards to hear what he said.

"You say she's been acting queerly all day—how much—won't she tell—I'll come over," and he hurried into the hall.

I rushed after him.

"What is it, Landry? Is it Louisa Lawrence?"

"Yes. Don't delay me, Sybil," and without another word he left us.

I went upstairs when mother did, but was too uneasy to go to bed, so I put on a kimona, turned out the lights and sat in the window to watch for Landry.

As I sat there in the darkness all that Louisa had said to me returned to me with a vividness almost greater than when she had spoken. Her confession that she loved Landry, her arraignment of me as a wife, and her prophecy that I would find more unhappiness in New York than I ever had found in Horning all recurred to me as I sat alone waiting.

Then I remembered with a shudder how Louisa looked when she drank that whisky out of the bottle I had found in the closet. How she had whined when she begged me to get her the morphine. How terribly emaciated she was, and how sort of hopeless Landry had seemed when I told him what she had said; even though he had assumed that perhaps Warren could help.

I was so intent on my thoughts that I had not appreciated how late it was until I heard the old grandfather's clock in the hall strike two. Could it be possible! Why it was only a little after 11 o'clock when Landry went out. Louisa must be very ill, or perhaps he had gone to see the little scarlet fever patient. With a muttered grumble I crept into bed and soon was fast asleep.

Did I imagine it, or did I hear someone moving softly into the room.

"Landry!" I spoke quietly. I did not want to wake father or mother.

"Yes, Sybil. Did I frighten you?"

"No—what time is it?"

"Nearly three o'clock."

"What are you doing? Aren't you coming to bed?"

"No—I'm looking for something I need in my case." He had packed many of his instruments in his traveling case.

"Why—what's the matter?"

"Louisa is very ill. Is Dwight in his own room?"

"Yes, why?"

"I want to see him a minute, and I thought perhaps he had been moved while the house is so full."

"No; he's in his own room." Then I sensed something strange in Landry's voice, his manner, and asked:

"Is Louisa much worse?"

"Yes. Much worse."

"She's in no danger, is she?"

"Grave danger!" he replied as he quietly left the room. I listened. He had gone directly to Dwight's room. In a moment he was back.

"I am going out again, Sybil. Go to sleep," and before I could question him he was gone. By the time I was out of bed I heard the front door close.

I hurried to the window, and to my surprise Dwight was with him. What could it mean? Then I thought of Landry's fears for Louisa as only those of a physician. Perhaps he was going to perform some slight

operation and wanted Dwight to assist him. Strange he didn't go after Warren.

But I was tired; I had been very busy the last month putting our clothes in order and getting everything done before I left; aside from all the social demands which had been made upon me. So I crept back to bed and slept until broad daylight. Landry had not yet come in.

I dressed and went down to breakfast.

"I just had a telephone message from Landry," mother told me. "They will be here in a few minutes, but we won't wait."

"They? Who?" I had forgotten all about Dwight.

"Landry and Dwight," she answered.

"Do you see them now?" mother asked as I looked out the window.

"No."

"Well, come, Father. Come, Sybil, your coffee is getting cold."

I felt a strange reluctance to leave the window. A strange curiosity to know what had happened. Not the jealous curiosity I always had felt when I knew Landry to be with Louisa, but a sort of premonition that something was wrong.

"I can't understand what is keeping them. She must be very ill," mother remarked.

Twice I got up from the table and looked down the street. Finally I settled myself to eat my breakfast. Father had remarked in his homely way:

"A watched pot never boils, daughter." I saw I was making him nervous.

"There they are!" mother exclaimed as we heard the door shut a few moments after, and they came into the

dining room. Landry, more serious than I think I ever had seen him, and Dwight's face so white and drawn one would scarcely have known him.

"What is it?" and mother sprang from the table in alarm and went to Dwight, laying her hand affectionately on his arm. "What has happened?"

"Louisa died half an hour ago," Landry said simply.

"Louisa dead!" I gasped, not able to grasp it.

"Yes, she took an overdose of morphine, and I could do nothing for her. God!" he exclaimed, without irreverence, "I should like to get hold of the druggist who sold it to whoever gave it to her!"

CHAPTER XXII

At last we arrived in New York. All that had happened that last day seemed now only a terrible nightmare. Our goods had already arrived, and the real estate agent had found a house that, while it didn't exactly suit us, Landry said would have to do. The rent seemed absolutely staggering after Horning, but I never annoyed Landry about finances; nor questioned his judgment in money matters.

The house was well up in the sixties, a brown stone, high-stoop structure, with nothing to differentiate it from the rest of the row, or from the row opposite. I knew I should miss our big front yard; the flowers; and broad porches. Yet I was excited at the idea of living in New York; at the thought of making new acquaintances, but more than all because now I should have Landry all to myself.

He decided to use the parlor floor for his reception room and office. There were only two rooms on that floor. It seemed so strange to have a house cut up in tiers, like a sleeping car, after our spacious floors of five or six rooms each. The second floor would be our living and sleeping rooms; Randolph would have his crib in our room. We would close the third floor, all but one room for the servant.

We stayed at a small family hotel until our things were moved in and I had found a maid. A good-natured Irish girl, who loved children—at least that was what she said. Her name was Bridget, and after the Annies

and Katies and Nellies I had had, the old-fashioned Irish name appealed to me.

She wasn't afraid of work, and as Landry and I both helped every minute we were soon settled. Once more Landry's bright sign decorated the front of a house, and he also put a white cardboard, lettered in black, in the window.

"I must get busy right away!" he laughed when I remonstrated. "This rent will eat up all we have if I don't."

Food, while expensive, was cheaper than in Horning, and very much better. Then we could have a much greater variety. Bridget was a good cook, but inclined to be wasteful.

"Shure, where I worked last they niver minded what I done with the lavin's!" she told me, when I cautioned her about saving the left-overs for the next meal.

"Well, we mind very much, Bridget. In the first place, Doctor Jones cannot afford any extravagance, and then it is wicked. When so many people haven't enough to eat, it is wicked to waste."

"I niver thot of that, ma'am! I'll be savin' ivery scrap."

In about two weeks from the time we left Horning we were nicely settled. The weather had been remarkably cool, and I laughed at the idea of its being bad for either me or the baby to be in New York in summer.

We were sitting in the living room, trying to decide whether to remain in or go for a walk, when Bridget brought up Doctor and Mrs. Ward's cards.

"I put 'em in the office, ma'am!" she said.

I never had met Mrs. Ward, and when the tall, dignified, prematurely gray woman came up the stairs I felt just a little embarrassed. But Doctor Ward was

unaffectedly glad to see me; he wanted to see the house, and was so interested that any strangeness I felt soon wore off. Mrs. Ward, too, was extremely affable. They yielded to Landry's persuasions and remained for some time. Bridget made some delicious chicken and lettuce sandwiches, with mayonnaise dressing, and we had cakes and coffee. She amused Mrs. Ward and would have embarrassed me horribly had it not been so funny.

"Yis, ma'am! They is left-overs," she answered.

We all laughed and after she removed the dishes I repeated what I had told her, and her reply.

"New York garbage pails would feed an army," Doctor Ward remarked.

"Don't let him commence on that subject," Mrs. Ward exclaimed in pretended horror. "It's a hobby with him, and he'll ride it half the night."

"Isn't she lovely!" I exclaimed as the door closed after them.

"Indeed she is, and the doctor tells me she has always been an inspiration to him," Landry returned.

The very next day after Doctor and Mrs. Ward called I wanted to say something to Landry, and rushed into his back office, or consulting room, without knocking. Seated facing him was one of the loveliest women I ever had seen. A golden blonde, about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, I judged. They seemed to be talking very confidentially and she appeared embarrassed by the interruption, while Landry's scowl was patent.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," I stammered at last. "I thought you were alone." Then, as Landry made no move to introduce me, I slowly backed out of the room.

I had scarcely thought of Louisa Lawrence for days so busy had I been getting settled; but now all that she

had said anent the fascinations of the New York women recurred to me. She had not exaggerated if the stylishly dressed, handsome woman in Landry's office was a sample. She had scarcely put it strongly enough. Was I to be kept out while Landry talked in confidence with women like that?

I never once thought of what Louisa had said of me: that I was unworthy of Landry because I didn't trust him. She had told me that when I reached New York my troubles would only begin. And had added that it would only serve me right. Poor Louisa! I was a true, faithful wife to Landry. I loved him very dearly, and he knew it. But if he supposed I would stand for his being shut up in that back room with attractive women he was mistaken. I wouldn't.

I went directly upstairs, but waited at the top. I could see the entrance door perfectly, and unless they talked very low, could hear what they said at parting.

I began to grow impatient; then I hesitated whether to go down again or not. Only the thought of that scowl on Landry's face deterred me. What in the world was she staying so long for?

Finally I heard the door between the reception room and the back room open; then they came through into the hall. As she reached the door, she extended her hand, exquisitely gloved, and said:

"Thank you, Doctor Jones; you have helped me already."

"I'll see you again, Friday," Landry answered quietly, but I thought he held her hand longer than was at all necessary.

I quickly slipped into the living room. Landry came up after a few minutes, seated himself, and with a serious look on his face said:

"Please, never do again what you did today. My consulting room is for my patients. If it should be vitally necessary for you to talk to me during my office hours, you can tap on the door and I will come to you as soon as I can."

"You mean that I have to rap whether anyone is there or not?"

"Yes. Then there will be no awkward mistakes like today's."

"Well, I just won't do it, Landry. If you think I am going to rap and ask permission to see my own husband you're mistaken. Anyone would think you were ashamed to have your patients know you had a wife!"

"I shall be ashamed of you, Sybil, if you don't use your common sense."

"It isn't using common sense to be treated like a stranger, and submit to it," I snapped. "Just because you want to be alone for hours with a handsome woman."

"Now see here, Sybil, are you going to be unreasonable again? I thought when Louisa died it might have some effect upon you. You were continually finding fault because of her. But I see that it hasn't."

It was the first time he had brought Louisa into the conversation; and in some strange way, in spite of what Louisa herself had told me, I again felt jealous of the time he had spent with her.

"You knew she loved you and told me so!" I broke out recklessly. "She said she had always loved you, perhaps she killed herself because she couldn't have you. Maybe I'll kill myself like she did if you lock yourself up with stylish, handsome women."

"I wasn't locked in, Sybil. But I certainly shall see that the door is locked hereafter when anyone wishes to

consult me. You will please remember that now it isn't simply a question of my practice; it is a question of making money to live on."

"I guess we could manage to live if you didn't have such smart-looking women for patients. I suppose she made love to you."

"That will do, Sybil," and Landry, white with anger, rose to leave me. "When you are in your right mind again I shall talk to you, but in your present mood we should only quarrel. A bad way to commence because of my first patient."

"What's her name? Who is she?"

"Her name is Hyde, Mrs. Hyde."

"So she has a husband! He better keep her at home. I don't want her hanging around you."

"I shall be back for lunch," and Landry, with his usual kiss, hurried down the stairs and out the front door.

"I meant just what I said! I won't have her in his private office," I said aloud as I watched him swing down the street.

We ate luncheon that day almost in silence, each busy with his thoughts. When he rose from the table, Landry remarked:

"I shall religiously keep my office hours, both morning and afternoon, at least until such time as it may not be necessary. I trust I shall not be obliged to speak to you again by a recurrence of this morning's performance. I shall regret having my office in the house if anything like it happens again."

Landry had spoken in his most severe manner. I made no answer, but after he closed the door I brushed the tears from my eyes. It was going to be the same old story, only with changed surroundings, I thought bit-

terly. The same heartaches because Landry would insist upon remaining in a profession which gave him no time for his wife; and all the time they wanted to his patients.

By the first of July it had become very hot. The asphalt blistered and smoked; and the baby had become fretful and restless.

Then, one day just as we finished dinner, mother walked in.

"I read in the paper that it was very hot in New York so I came to take Randolph home with me until the summer is over. You too, Sybil, if you will go," but she knew when she said it that I would not leave Landry.

"Just the thing!" Landry exclaimed enthusiastically. "I have been urging Sybil to do that very thing; but she wouldn't mind me."

"Will you come back with me tomorrow, Sybil? That baby sha'n't stay in this oven another day."

"No, mother, I'll stay with Landry. But if you will take Randolph I will be glad to trust him with you. He is a little fretful, and so restless at night. Get Annie to help you while he is with you. He knows her and she can relieve you a lot."

It was my first parting from my baby boy; and it seemed as if I couldn't let him go when the time came. Landry too, I am sure, felt as I did, for he clung to the baby, until he was almost carried off with them.

I had no idea how I should miss him. Landry was at home very little save when he was in his office. He had commenced to help Doctor Ward at the hospital, and soon would be regularly appointed on the staff.

Starr Jordan had called and enthused over the impression Landry had made on the directors, his father

included, but had left me feeling anything but happy by saying as he went out:

"If he makes as good an impression on his women patients I should be jealous were I in your place."

I heard Landry mutter something that sounded very like "fool!" as Starr made the laughing remark. But I knew that I was already worried; already insanely jealous of the women who came to Landry's office to consult him, or to be treated for their ailments.

"They should go to a woman doctor!" I grumbled. "There are plenty of them nowadays."

"I don't see how I am to make money if you wish my patients on someone else," Landry replied, refusing to take me seriously.

"I don't believe half of them are one bit sick!" I added.

"If they think they are it amounts to the same thing."

CHAPTER XXIII

"LANDRY, now that baby is gone, it is so lonely here I almost go mad!" I complained one noon. "Now don't tell me I might have gone, too; I know that! But can't we do something, go somewhere these warm evenings? You are so wrapped up in those musty books and those fascinating patients of yours that you haven't a thought for me."

"Bad as that, Sybil!" he laughed. Then, soberly, "Forgive me, dear, I have been thoughtless, I guess. We'll go to a roof garden this very night. Tell Bridget to give us a light dinner, then we'll see some show and have supper on the roof."

"Oh, that will be fine!" and all the afternoon I was happy in the thought that Landry and I were to have a nice evening together.

We went to a roof garden performance; then afterward crossed the street to the roof of a popular hotel. I thought I was in fairyland. The myriads of colored lights, the beautiful plants, the lovely music, all entranced me, the country girl, who hadn't grown surfeited with gaiety, as are most city girls.

Landry found a table in a spot where I could see all over the place, and gave his order; and while we waited for it we admired everything and everyone we saw.

Suddenly there was a stir near us; gay laughter, and a drawing out of chairs by obsequious waiters. Interested, I leaned forward the better to see, and looked straight into the big blue eyes of Mrs. Hyde.

Would she recognize me, I wondered. But no, she

swept me with a casual stare and seated herself. Never once that I could see looked toward us.

"There's your Mrs. Hyde!" I said to Landry; my pleasure spoiled. "I don't see what she wanted to come here for!"

"We've no first mortgage on the roof, Sybil," Landry answered pleasantly as if the presence of his lovely patient meant nothing to him.

"Don't you think it strange she didn't speak to you?"

"No, Sybil, and please do not spoil our evening by speculating on things you do not understand, and which really are none of your business."

"Who's that big, coarse-looking man with her?"

"I don't know—her husband, perhaps."

"Here comes our supper, and I for one am ready for it."

I really tried to throw off the feeling of uneasiness I had at the proximity of the lovely Mrs. Hyde; but it was impossible, my eyes constantly wandered her way; and I was absent-minded and very uncommunicative.

There was a stir, and Mrs. Hyde and her party rose to go. They had not ordered supper; simply had some champagne. I noticed hers remained untouched.

As they rose from the table she flashed a glance at Landry. It could not be called a bow, but there was recognition and—something else in it; something I could not define.

We walked slowly home. It was a lovely night after a hot, suffocating day. When we reached home I went directly upstairs while he stopped on the office floor. In a moment I imagined I heard voices, and supposing, of course, it was Bridget, I walked to the head of the stairs to speak to her.

What was my surprise to see by the dim light Mrs.

Hyde. She was talking very excitedly; and Landry never looked around, although he had heard my gasp of surprise.

"Come into the office," he said finally so that I heard. They had been talking in undertones.

She followed him and I heard the door close. I stood shivering with anger in spite of the heat of the night. That was what she meant by that look she flashed on Landry as she left the roof. She was making an appointment. Their friendship must have progressed far to make such a thing possible so soon after meeting each other. Doctor and patient, indeed! My lip curled with scorn as I thought how easily they imagined I was fooled.

I stood at the head of the stairs for about fifteen minutes. I know, because the clock on the church around the corner struck quarter of twelve just as we came in; and now it was chiming out the twelve strokes of midnight.

My foot was on the stair. I had decided to go down and demand to be admitted to the private office when I heard a step, then voices; and Landry and Mrs. Hyde again came out and stood under the chandelier, from which only the night light shed a faint glow upon their faces.

They were talking earnestly and I felt perfectly safe in crouching down on the stairs and listening. At first I could not understand what they were saying, more because of my own excitement, my resentment, than because they tried to lower their voices. But Landry spoke:

"Yes, Mrs. Hyde, I think that is the only way. If you will come in tomorrow, I will have it ready for you," and bowing low over her hand, which she impul-

sively extended, he opened the door and stood until she had entered her car and been driven away.

I made no motion to let my presence be known, and Landry turned back to the office and I heard him switch off the lights.

Quietly I went into the bedroom and commenced to undress.

"Who was it? I heard voices," I told him when a moment after Landry came up.

"A patient."

"A patient! What was she doing here this time of night? I know it was a woman. I heard her talking."

"The hour makes no difference to people needing a physician," he replied.

"But who was it?" I asked again.

"A patient, I told you, Sybil. Now let's get to bed. Remember I told you I had to be up early to assist at an operation."

One thing I was sure I should do, and that was find out all about Mrs. Hyde. How I should go about it I hadn't the slightest idea; but find out I would. "A designing hussy," I called her in my thoughts.

If that big, coarse-looking man was her husband, I didn't wonder Landry attracted her. But he belonged to me, and I would let her realize that fact.

By and by, I too fell asleep, but only to dream of Louisa Lawrence and Mrs. Hyde. In some strange, incomprehensible manner they seemed to link themselves together in my dreams. And Louisa wore that cunning, sneering look she had worn when she told me I was unworthy of Landry; that I would lose him to some fascinating New York woman. And Mrs. Hyde seemed to be casting a meaning glance over her shoulder as she did

when she turned toward Landry as she left the roof garden.

Toward morning I fell into a deep, dreamless, exhausting sleep, and did not waken until I heard the front door close. It was nearly nine o'clock. I jumped up and looked out the window. Landry was hurrying away in the direction of the hospital, leaving me to breakfast alone. A feeling of utmost loneliness crept into my heart. I heard the bell, but paid no attention.

"A gentleman to see you, ma'am," Bridget interrupted my musings.

"To see me—you mean the doctor?"

"No, ma'am, he asked most particular for 'Mrs. Jones.'"

I rose from the table and went into the doctor's reception room, still thinking Bridget had made a mistake. But no! There stood Homer Carleton, a look of expectancy on his face; and when he saw me both hands flew out in greeting.

"My, but it is good to see you!" he exclaimed, holding both my hands tightly in his. "Where's Landry?"

"At the hospital, as usual," I replied, and some of the bitterness I felt crept into my voice.

"Whew——!"

"Was it anything particular you wanted of him?" I asked, purposely misunderstanding his ejaculation.

"No—yes—I thought you might go to the theater and a roof garden with me tonight. I am going back tomorrow, but we could make a night of it. I don't suppose Landry is so busy yet that he needs his beauty sleep."

"We went to a show and roof garden last night."

"And—something happened," he looked keenly at me.

"Come tonight and I'll promise nothing shall happen to annoy you—that is if I can prevent it."

"You're a mind reader!" I laughed. "Stay to lunch, or come back and ask Landry," I suggested, and he agreed to return and lunch with us at one o'clock.

I was delighted to see Homer, and as soon as he left, gave orders for a nice luncheon.

A little before eleven Landry came in and I called to him:

"Come upstairs a minute, Landry!"

"Well, what is it?" he asked. Landry always spoke sharply when he was called away from what he wished to do.

"Who do you think has been here?"

"I'm sure I don't know! If you have anything to tell me, be quick. I have to change."

"Homer Carleton, and he's coming back to luncheon!"

"All right! Is that all?"

"No, it is not! I wish you would show half the interest in what I tell you that you do in what your women patients tell you! I didn't notice signs that you were in a hurry last night when your Mrs. Hyde was talking to you, even if it was midnight!"

"How did you know it was Mrs. Hyde? I don't remember that we spoke of her."

Now I made up my mind not to let Landry know I was jealous of Mrs. Hyde or anyone—if I could help it: but to manage in some way to keep him away from them; or them from him. So I replied:

"I went through the upper hall just as she left."

"I hope you weren't spying on me, Sybil. Do have more dignity."

"You must feel that you need spying on or you

wouldn't suggest it!" I flung at him. He made no answer, but turned and went immediately into his office.

I was still feeling the sting of our unpleasant little tilt when the bell rang. Womanlike I rushed to the mirror to see if I looked all right.

"I'll tell her, sor!" I heard Bridget say after a minute, and I called:

"Come right up, Homer!"

"How do you stand this awful heat?" Homer asked.

"I get along very nicely. It was nice that mother could take Randolph, though."

"Nice! Why she would have taken him if she had to steal him! Dwight told me that when she saw the reports of the terrific heat in New York, she was too much excited to talk; that she dropped everything and rushed off after him like a mad woman."

"I was glad to let him go, although I miss him terribly. Tell me all the gossip."

"Not much to tell. Things have been mighty quiet since you left. Louisa Lawrence's death has depressed everyone. I suppose you heard that she did it," he lowered his tone. "I wonder why?" I could have told of my own suspicions, of her love for Landry, but did not, only asked:

"Did they ever find out who got the morphine for her?"

"Yes—that Munson kid! It seems she gave him five dollars, and some druggist let him have it. I suppose he told some fake story about being sent from the hospital."

Landry accepted Homer's invitation for dinner in the evening, to my great delight. We met him at Harridge's. As I never had been there I looked forward to the dinner with pleasure. That was one nice thing

about New York; there were so many different places to go. In Horning it was the same old place over and over whenever one dined in public.

"By George! There's a stunning woman!" Homer exclaimed.

"Yes—a patient of Landry's," I replied. "Mrs. Hyde."

We were having our coffee when suddenly there was a commotion. Then I saw the head waiter hurrying past; then Landry half rose from his chair, as a crash of dishes and glassware made us all start to our feet.

The table at which Mrs. Hyde had sat was overturned, and the big man I had seen with her on the roof the night before was swaying drunkenly beside it.

"So you won't come with me; we'll see about that!" and he took hold of her none too gently.

"Yes, I'm coming," she responded evenly, as she gathered her gloves and purse. Then she said something to the head waiter, and went out, her head high, but her face as white as chalk, and the big blue eyes staring straight before her.

"Beast!" Landry muttered, as we all settled in our chairs again. "I thought he had had too much to drink, but I didn't think he was far enough gone for that. Poor woman, I'm sorry for her."

"Does he often act like that?" I asked with a shudder. "What an awful thing for a man to do in public. How shamed a woman must feel."

Noting our confusion the head waiter offered excuses.

"She probably refused to do something he proposed, and so angered him. He doesn't care a whoop for anyone when he's in that mood. And he gets away with it somehow. People wink at his brutality because of his money. If he'd been a poor chap the waiters would

have thrown him out. But he's a good customer, you see. And he has one good point—he is very generous with everybody, his wife included."

"Time to go!" Homer said, as he paid the check.

I was drawing on my gloves when I heard:

"A call for Doctor Jones! Doctor Jones, please!"

"Someone calling you, doctor!" Homer said.

"Not me!" Landry replied. "I'm not known yet."

"Jones is such an unusual name, Landry, you better see what it is!" Homer laughed as the call was repeated:

"A call for Doctor Jones! Doctor Jones, please!"

"Here, boy!" Landry motioned. "Might as well see if it could be me. I'll meet you in the corridor," he said. "They want this Doctor Jones on the telephone, I'll answer it anyway," and he rushed out.

We followed slowly, then waited for him.

"It was for me," he said when he joined us. "Too bad, Carleton. But you'll have to excuse me. Take good care of Sybil. Leave a ticket in the office for me, and, if I can get away, I'll join you."

"Who was it——"

"No time to talk," he interrupted my question. "Good-night, Homer, if I don't see you. Run in the next time you come to town," and he was gone.

"Don't look so disappointed, Mrs. Jones. I will do my best to entertain you," smiled Homer.

"Who do you suppose it can be?" I asked.

"Probably the hospital," Homer answered carelessly. "You hardly have lived here long enough to have private patients hunting the doctor."

"But how did they know where we were?" I persisted. Some way I felt more than annoyed that Landry had left us; I was distinctly uneasy.

"That maid of yours probably told them. You know she was in the room this noon when we decided where to dine."

I gave a sigh of relief. That was the explanation. I was not quite conscious of what it was I feared; but the feeling was gone and I proceeded to enjoy myself. Not that I didn't resent Landry's desertion. I did bitterly. Had he been in any business no one would have dreamed of interrupting his pleasant evening. But because he was so foolish as to choose to be a physician, he was at everybody's beck and call. How I hated it.

"I do wish Landry were here!" I whispered to Homer when a particularly graceful dancer was on the stage. "He is very fond of good dancing."

CHAPTER XXIV

ABOUT ten-thirty the next morning the telephone in the office rang. Landry never returned from the hospital until nearly eleven, so I ran downstairs to answer it.

"Is this Doctor Jones' office?" an agitated voice—a woman's voice—asked. "This is Mrs. Hyde speaking."

"Yes."

"Will you tell Doctor Jones that it will be impossible for me to come to his office this morning, as I promised last night; that I shall see him at my home instead, about three o'clock, please, if it will not discommode him."

"I'll tell him," I replied, and her faint "Thank you," was scarcely audible.

What had Landry meant by trying to deceive me? He had allowed me to think he went to the hospital when he left us at Harridge's to finish our dinner without him, and again on the way home from the theater he had not denied being there when I spoke of it.

Well, I'd take something else for granted! He usually left the house after luncheon and didn't return until about four o'clock, his office hour. I would not give him the message I had just received. I would pretend I thought he could not give up his time at the hospital to make a private call, and so I hadn't thought it worth mentioning.

But I was uneasy. Landry, as I have said, could be very stern, very uncompromising. But if ever I was to

be happy I must expect to endure a little unpleasantness. I almost wished, now that Louisa Lawrence was dead, we had not left Horning. She had been almost prophetic in her warning. The New York women were infinitely more fascinating; and I wondered if she would be right also in telling me my troubles, my unhappiness had only begun.

Landry came in to lunch whistling.

"Well, Sybil, I begin to see our way clear. I have made an arrangement with Doctor Ward and the directors by which I am to have the use of the hospital to continue my studies of surgery; at the same time I am assisting the doctor with his most complicated cases. I shall be at the hospital more than I am at present; and cut my office hours at the house. But I hope to build up a small paying private practice. Our expenses are heavy and there are several things I should do, which we really cannot afford."

"Just what?"

"I should have a boy to open the door until I get an office nurse. It looks badly to have Bridget opening the door in her working clothes; often soiled."

"I suppose you'd like me to do it!"

"No, Sybil, I shouldn't. It wouldn't be the thing at all. But a good front goes a long way in New York; and in some way I must either manage the nurse, or until I can, a boy to wait on the door and answer the telephone."

Here was my chance to tell him of Mrs. Hyde's call, but I brushed the impulse aside.

"What do you mean by an office nurse? Is it a nurse who stays here during your office hours?" I asked, in a way glad if some one were to be in the office when his patients came.

"Yes, and nearly all day. There is a young nurse at the hospital who is pretty well worn out with her work. She is very capable, and will come to me very reasonably. The work here will be very light, especially now," and he laughed; "my patients aren't numerous enough to overwork any one. Yet when you consider we've been here only about six weeks, I am fortunate to have any one. I probably shouldn't had it not been for Doctor Ward's recommending me to several families. And all families of wealth and position. That is one reason my office must look prosperous. They will not continue to come to a shabbily run office; neither will they recommend a doctor who appears unsuccessful to their friends. I had a long talk with Doctor Ward this morning, and he agrees with me that I must look very prosperous to secure an office practice which will be worth anything financially."

"I hope you won't have any more charity patients as you did in Horning. It is bad enough to be neglected for them when they pay. But when you take the time from me and give it to some charity patient, I am furious. Any filthy old diseased man or woman had more of your time and attention than I did."

"Don't talk nonsense! Of course, I shall never refuse to treat a patient who needs help because he is poor. But just now I was speaking of a different practice. Later I hope to give up general practice altogether, but first I have to make some money. It may be years before I can do it," he added, more to himself than to me.

"Would you be with me more as a surgeon?" I asked.

"Do you never think of any one but yourself, Sybil?" he asked sharply. "No! I probably should not be with you as much."

"Then I hope and pray you may never be a success as a surgeon!" and I meant it.

"You are a great inspiration to a man!" was all Landry said, but his tone was very bitter.

Landry left the table almost immediately. By my unsympathetic speech I had caused his mood to change entirely. He had come whistling; telling his plans happily; and now he walked into his office, a frown on his face; his lips set in a straight line.

"I don't care, I did mean it!" I declared aloud when I was alone. "I don't want him to be a surgeon or anything that takes him away from me!"

At two I heard the front door close. For a moment I thought of calling him back and repeating Mrs. Hyde's message. Then I remembered how all his plans were against my happiness, and sat still. He had not called to me as usual. He was angry at me because I had been honest with him. I was not ambitious for either wealth or fame. I wanted love, my husband's time.

Bridget came up to ask me a question about three or a little after. When I had given her the information she asked for, she still waited twirling a corner of her apron.

"What is it, something else?" I asked.

"Did you forget to tell the doctor, ma'am, about the telephone call?"

"How did you know the call was for him?" I asked, amazed. Like all servants, Bridget almost worshiped the doctor.

"You remimber I was a dustin' by you whin you was a talkin', and I couldn't help hearin'."

"Well, what of it!" I said testily. "Get downstairs and do your work or you'll be late with dinner, and I want to go out to-night."

"Yis, ma'am. I'll have it ready on time—but—ma'am, beggin' your pardon, ma'am, don't you think he'll be angry if you forgot it! I kin telephone the hospital. She might die or somethin', then it would be awful!"

"You go downstairs immediately. I'll attend to my own and the doctor's affairs without your help."

But what she had said only intensified my dislike of Mrs. Hyde. "That woman!" as I always called her in my thoughts.

Landry came in at four as usual. He called up to me as he always did when he came home.

"Home again, Sybil! Any calls this afternoon?"

"No," I answered truthfully. The telephone had not rung; neither had any called since noon.

He had two new patients that afternoon. I know, because I always watched from the head of the stairs when I heard the bell ring. They were both handsomely dressed, prosperous-looking women. I went to the window each time after they had gone into the private office; and one of them came in a gorgeous limousine with two men on the box. The other one had evidently walked. Neither remained very long; but I was literally on pins and needles while they were with Landry. If only I might hear what they talked about.

He remained in his office some time after they left; then as no one else appeared, he came upstairs.

"Who rang the bell? I heard it twice," I said as he took a book and commenced to read.

"Patients!" he returned.

"Yes, I suppose so! But one of them came in a wonderful limousine. I saw it out of the window," I added.

"That was a Mrs. Hatch. Doctor Ward sent her to me."

"Who was the other one?"

"Her name was Bradford."

"What was the matter with them? They both looked healthy enough," I had forgotten for a moment.

"How did you see them?" Landry looked up quickly, and suspiciously.

"I told you I was looking out of the window."

"Well, be very careful, Sybil, that the patients do not see you staring at them. Sick people are extremely sensitive and are apt to take offense even when none is meant."

"I guess I have a right to look out of the window!" I retorted.

"Of course, you have—just draw back when you see the patients come or go," and as if he had said all there was to say, he began reading.

That night I coaxed him to take me to a moving picture show. It had cooled off considerable and I was uneasy at home.

Nothing had been heard of Mrs. Hyde; she had not telephoned again, although once just before dinner when the phone rang I was afraid it might be her. Then as we left for the theater I reasoned that as long as Landry hadn't gone to her when she called, she would probably call some other doctor and we never would hear of her again.

I never considered the unwifely thing I had done and was doing in keeping the knowledge of her call from Landry; nor did I once think that he would lose a paying patient. That part I never considered.

The pictures were very good; and it was quite late

when we reached home. On the rack in the hall was a large piece of white paper on which Bridget had scrawled a telephone number.

Landry picked up the paper and went immediately to the telephone. Bridget wrote very poorly, was apt to get messages twisted, so Landry had told her to put down nothing but the telephone number of any one who called when we were out.

I waited in the hall to listen.

"This is Doctor Jones talking. I found this telephone number when I came in. May I speak to Mrs. Hyde?—Yes—what—I heard nothing of it—very well—I'll investigate—I am very sorry—yes—at—ten—good-night!"

I trembled slightly as I hurried upstairs. Landry would question me I was positive. He had told her he would investigate; and that could mean but one thing. She had spoken of the message I took that morning.

I heard voices after a minute, and knew that Bridget, who had been entertaining her "young man," was being questioned. I hoped she would not tell him what she had said to me. But she was so ignorant and so fond of Landry she might be foolish enough to do so.

It was ten minutes later when Landry came up. The moment he came into the room I saw he was very angry.

"Did you take Mrs. Hyde's message yesterday morning?" he asked in a dangerously quiet voice.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell me when I came in to luncheon, or why didn't you put the message on the slate?"

"Because I won't have that woman coming here!"

"Because you——" He stopped, so angry he evidently could not finish. The veins in his forehead looked as if they would burst; yet I wasn't really worried. I

thought I had done the right thing, so why should I be?

"Because I won't have that woman coming here and making love to you locked in that office."

"You admit that you deliberately held back the message, do you?"

"Certainly. Didn't I just say I did?"

"My God!——" he said, then under his breath he mumbled something about "marrying a woman like that!" I didn't catch the exact words; but the meaning was obvious.

"Oh, I suppose you are sorry you married me instead of some one like her!" I threw out, "but it happens you did marry me, and I am going to see that you are not spending your time locked up with other women."

"What are you trying to do, Sybil, ruin me?" Still that fierce repression in his voice.

"I am trying to make you see your duty to me—your wife."

"My—duty to—you!" he laughed then, a hard, cynical laugh very unlike his usual hearty one.

"Yes, your duty to me. I did wrong to marry you until you gave up your profession! I knew no girl—no woman ever could be happy as a doctor's wife, but I loved you so well I was foolish and——"

"Love! The way you act isn't the way of love. You will find, and I also," he added bitterly, "that this insane jealousy will grow upon you just like drink or any other bad habit if you make no attempt to overcome it. It will mean lifelong unhappiness for us both."

"If you loved me——"

"We'll leave love out. Just now it is beside the question. Mrs. Hyde is a fine woman. She has chosen me, at Doctor Ward's instigation, as her physician. I shall continue to treat her as long as she requires my services.

How I shall explain my failure to receive her message, I don't know. But if this ever happens again I shall give up the house; you and I will board; and I will take offices in some office building."

"And you think I would consent to any such arrangement!"

"You would have to," his tone was cold and severe.

"I would not 'have to!' You couldn't compel me."

"You would either do that or go home to your mother."

"You mean——"

"I mean that I will not have myself, my practice, my future ruined by a jealous woman. I told you when we were first married that my profession was the first, the biggest thing in my life. I may be wrong; but I have not changed; I never shall change. If you continue to interfere with my success I shall get along without you. You understand me, I hope. There must be no more suppressed messages; no more spying," and without another word he commenced to undress.

CHAPTER XXV

For days Landry only spoke when I addressed him. Then he always answered courteously, but that was all.

Finally I could endure it no longer and one day I again spoke of Mrs. Hyde.

"You must be very much interested, to say the least, in that woman to allow yourself to treat me as you are doing because of her."

"She has nothing to do with it! You have shown me you are too small, too little, to have any hope of happiness with me. I had hoped when we came to New York that you would leave your insane jealousy behind. But it seems to grow worse. If you had cause I should say nothing, but, Sybil, there comes a time when a man will not endure to be constantly blamed for something he does not do."

"You mean you would give me cause," I returned. "More than you already have?"

"I did not say so."

"You might as well!" Then I lost control of myself, and began to cry, at the same time to accuse Landry.

"Didn't Louisa Lawrence kill herself because of you?" I demanded hysterically. "No woman kills herself for love of a man unless he has at some time made her think he cared for her!"

"I should leave that poor girl out of the conversation if I were in your place. You had her own confession. You should need nothing further. And crying will do no good."

"But you have treated me shamefully for days. You

haven't taken me anywhere, and hardly spoken to me," I sobbed.

"If you wish we will go to the pictures or some roof garden to-night. That is, if I have no calls."

"That's just it. If nothing else intervenes you will condescend to be with me; that's just what's making our marriage a disappointment for both of us. For me because I am treated so badly; neglected so shamefully for any and everybody; for you because I won't quietly submit. Oh, I hate being a doctor's wife!"

"I'm sorry, but isn't it rather late for you to talk that way? It will be the first of September to-morrow. I have written your mother to come and visit us for a week and bring Randolph back. It is cool enough now, and she wrote last week, you remember, that he was perfectly well."

"Why did you write for them without asking me?"

"Because I thought you needed them. You are too much alone; haven't enough to occupy your mind. You would be much happier, Sybil, if you would read and study more. Good books are wonderful companions when one is alone. And you will necessarily be much alone this winter."

"So I am to have the companionship of books; instead of that of my husband! Thank you, Landry, for your thoughtfulness," I said sarcastically. "I'll choose my own companions when you leave me alone."

"Very well, suit yourself."

"So you're not jealous?"

"Jealous! Why should I be?"

"You wouldn't care if I were locked up in a room with some good-looking man and refused to let you in?"

"Don't be silly, Sybil."

"But it is exactly as silly for you to do such things

and expect me to stand for it! Answer my question, please, how would you like it?"

"Such a condition of things is not possible. Why consider it? If you were a physician; or if in any business capacity it were necessary, why should I object? But as it is, with no possible reason or excuse for such a situation, we will not talk of it."

That night we went to the moving pictures and neither of us talked of anything unpleasant. When we reached home I threw myself into Landry's arms, and told him how miserable I was; how unhappy because of my jealous disposition and promised faithfully to try to overcome it.

The next morning when I awoke I couldn't think for a moment what had happened. Then I remembered that Landry and I had "made up" like two children and that was the reason I felt so light and happy. Then, too, mother and my precious boy were coming.

We had fixed up a guest room and mother could be very comfortable. Even Bridget was delighted to have Randolph back and mother with us.

"It has been that lonesome," she declared to mother, "you could hear a pin drop the house was that quiet."

"It won't be lonely any more," mother told her; "this young man is a houseful by himself."

And he was! I was so busy caring for him and trotting around with mother—she loved to shop—that I almost forgot to be jealous; almost forgot to watch who came and who went—almost.

Mother was very much interested in Landry's work and asked if she might visit the hospital. She seemed surprised that I had not yet been through it, and rather took me to task for my lack of interest.

Landry met us in the reception room and escorted us through the great building. It was really wonderfully fitted up, and I was interested in spite of myself. Yet the principal feeling I took home with me was a feeling of regret that there were so many good-looking nurses there.

"You have a fine-looking lot of nurses," mother said to Landry.

"Yes, and they are remarkably efficient. I hope to have one of them in my office soon. But she hasn't been very well and she preferred to lay off a while before she takes any work, even though it was much lighter."

So that was the reason Landry hadn't installed a nurse. He had not mentioned it again to me, and I thought he was waiting until he felt able to afford it.

"A good idea. I believe every physician who has an office practice that amounts to anything should have a nurse. Many women who hate to go to a doctor with their illnesses would do so if they were assured a woman was also in attendance."

"What does she look like?" I broke in.

"Oh, she has two eyes, a nose and a mouth. Otherwise, I believe she is a tall, slender girl or woman about twenty-five years old."

"What difference does it make about her looks if she is competent?" mother said to me.

"A great deal of difference. I don't propose to have any doll-faced creature making eyes at Landry, and helping him."

"Oh, Sybil, do get over such notions," she replied. Landry said nothing.

On the first of October Miss Hopkins came. Never shall I forget the shock I experienced when I first saw her and realized that she was the nurse who was to be

Landry's assistant; who was to be closeted with him, was to be his confidante.

Not that Ruth Hopkins was particularly beautiful, but there was something about her face which attracted, an appealing quality, such as Cousin Margaret possessed. She was very pale; more than that, she was absolutely without color; but her eyes were wonderful, great brown eyes set far apart. Her forehead was broad and low, and she had masses of brown hair which were only partly hidden by her nurse's cap; her mouth was sensitive and full lipped; the redness of her lips accentuated by her pallor. She was of medium height and very slender. I remember thinking she looked too frail to be a nurse.

From the moment I first saw Ruth Hopkins I both hated and mistrusted her. If it were absolutely necessary for Landry to have a house nurse, why could he not have secured some stout, elderly woman instead of this delicate girl? When I expressed my views he laughed at first, but when I persisted he told me:

"A pleasant, agreeable nurse is necessary. One whom the patients like."

"And one the doctor likes!" I added.

"Yes, that is necessary also. If people are to work together in any direction they must be at least congenial. Miss Hopkins can, and, I think, will, be of great assistance to me. I had also thought she might prove a pleasant acquaintance for you, as you are so nearly of an age; and you as yet have so few acquaintances."

"You'll excuse me if I do not make a companion of your servant," I retorted.

"Please do not call Miss Hopkins 'a servant,'" Landry chided. "She is an educated, refined woman. Added to that, she is a wonderfully capable nurse, whose

love for her profession, her anxiety to do good, to help humanity, has almost ruined her health."

"I suppose you think she is better than I; that you wish I had been a nurse. I don't like her looks, and I don't like her!"

"Please do not show your antagonism," Landry said in the cold, displeased tone I knew so well.

"I shall treat her as I think best!" I replied. "And I surely shall not be friendly with her." Then, woman-like, I asked: "Do you call her good looking, with that pasty face and those big eyes?"

"I had not thought about her looks, save that she was always scrupulously neat. But now that you have asked me, I shall look closely at her and tell you what I think," Landry answered in the sarcastic tone he seldom used, but which, when he did, he used effectively.

"You needn't on my account!"

"Now see here, Sybil, Miss Hopkins is coming. Nothing you can say will prevent that. But I am well aware that you can make her leave me if she realizes that you have made up your mind to dislike her, and if you make it plain to her that you do not wish her here. I am sorry it is so, but I imagine she is rather sensitive."

"And do you not want her tender feelings to be hurt?" I sneered.

"No, I do not! What is more, I *will not have you interfering with her or with her work for me*. Please understand that, Sybil. Now let's drop the subject."

"That suits me," I replied, but I added to myself, "for the present, but she won't stay here long," and that was the spirit in which I received Miss Hopkins in our home.

At first I saw but little of her. One reason being that I purposely kept out of her way, and another that Ran-

dolph was cutting teeth and was worrisome; so needing more attention.

One day when in the lower hall I heard the office telephone ring vigorously. I waited a moment, then as Miss Hopkins did not answer I hurried into the office. Just as I opened the door she laid down some instruments she had been sterilizing and started for the telephone.

"I will answer," I said coldly, as I reached for the receiver.

"Excuse me," she replied, as she took it from the hook. "Hello!" she called, then turned to me. "Doctor Jones wished me to take all messages," she said, then commenced to talk in her quiet, professional tones to whoever was calling.

I listened in silence, but I was boiling with anger. What right had she to take the telephone almost out of my hand? I waited until she had finished. She had made an appointment for Landry to see some one—a woman—the next day, then I broke out:

"It was not at all necessary for you to answer the telephone, Miss Hopkins. I could have attended to it quite well."

"I know you could, Mrs. Jones; but the doctor holds me responsible for all calls. A mistake, even a slight one, often is attended with serious consequences. One of the first things he did was to caution me to attend to the telephone myself."

"He meant, of course, that now you were here, Bridget would not be obliged to leave her work," I returned, conveying by my tone, if not by my words, that I put her in the same class with my house servant.

"The doctor said 'any one,'" she answered very quietly.

"Well, he didn't mean his wife. And hereafter when

I am in the office you need not leave your work when it rings. I won't keep you from it any longer," I added, then left the room.

When Landry came in to dinner I told him of what had happened.

"You should have heard the impudent thing!" I stormed. "You would have thought me a servant like herself. The way she insisted that no one should touch that telephone, and the way she snatched it out of my hand was most insulting! I suppose she thought she would show me her authority, but I'll show her her place, and it won't be in this house much longer!"

"Did you really have the receiver in your hand, and did she snatch it away, as you said?" Landry asked. "It doesn't seem at all like Miss Hopkins to do such a thing."

"That's right, stand up for her."

"You haven't answered my question."

"Well, if I didn't quite have it in my hand, I was reaching for it, and she pushed me aside and took it herself."

"She was simply obeying orders. That is one of the first things a nurse is obliged to learn, to obey orders without question."

"You mean that you ordered her not to allow any one - save herself to answer the telephone?"

"Yes; when she is in the office, I wish her to take all messages."

"But I guess I can take messages as well as she can."

"Probably—if you would. But, then, you know, you might forget to give them to me. It has happened, you remember."

I knew very well that he referred to the message I had purposely kept from him, Mrs. Hyde's message. But I ignored his meaning, and returned:

"Well, I don't intend to be bossed by another woman in my own house. If I choose to answer the telephone or do anything else, she isn't going to stop me."

"Oh, Sybil! why can't you use a little common sense?" Landry asked wearily. "You make life very hard for yourself and—for me," he added, the last so low I scarcely heard.

CHAPTER XXVI

SHORTLY after my little unpleasantness with Miss Hopkins, Mrs. Hyde called. I saw her from my window, and a very fury of jealousy possessed me. Miss Hopkins had been very pleasant whenever I had seen her, but I had not unbent toward her and had answered her greetings coldly.

I listened for a while, but all I could hear was a constant murmur of voices. Then, my curiosity getting the better of my prudence, I crept quietly down the stairs and into the waiting room. Fortunately it was empty.

I sat down close to the office door. Suddenly I realized that some one was weeping, weeping bitterly. I stood up and put my ear to the door.

"Try and compose yourself, Mrs. Hyde." It was Landry speaking. "You will make yourself very ill if you give way like this."

His voice was very tender, and I shivered as I heard him talk in such a tone to this woman, whom I feared and hated. Yes, I feared her. She was beautiful, accomplished, dressed exquisitely and was just the type to fascinate a fastidious man like Landry.

Then in a moment I heard Miss Hopkins' voice.

"Leave her with me, Doctor Jones. Perhaps I can help her." The sobbing was growing louder, wilder.

"I'll be back in ten minutes; I am going to the drug store," Landry replied. Then, before I could get out of the way, he swung open the door. Miss Hopkins saw me as he clutched my arm, but the dainty figure of the

sobbing woman in the chair never stirred; she never looked up.

"What does this mean?" Landry asked, so sternly that I perforce had to answer.

"I heard some one crying and came down to see if I could help," I stammered.

"Why didn't you rap if that was so?"

"I was just going to," I prevaricated.

"Why don't you tell the truth, Sybil, and say that you were listening? I don't wonder you are ashamed to confess it"—his voice took on a sneering tone; "I should be, in your place," and without another word he strode past me and out of the house.

I waited a moment, then, as the sobbing grew less, I went back upstairs just in time. Landry came in directly, with a small parcel.

"He makes an errand boy of himself for her," I said aloud, as I noticed.

I stood by the window until Mrs. Hyde left. Landry assisted her to her car, then stood talking with her. Perhaps he was unconscious of it, but he held her hand all the time they were talking. It also seemed to me that he assumed an almost lover-like attitude as he bent toward her.

"Why, oh, why didn't I refuse to marry him until he agreed not to practice his profession?" I said aloud, as I watched. "He would have promised me then—but now!"

When Landry came upstairs I asked:

"What in the world was Mrs. Hyde crying about?"

"Mrs. Hyde's troubles are her own," he answered shortly. I could see he had not forgiven me for listening.

"But she surely told you what she was making such a fuss over!" I insisted.

"If she did, I shall not repeat it."

"You must be very intimate when she comes to you with her troubles. I should think she would have older friends in whom she might confide; or, if she feels the need of a father confessor, why doesn't she go to her priest?"

"There are things a patient tells a doctor they can tell no one else," Landry returned quietly as he took his medical journal and sat down to read.

"Put down that old book and talk to me!" I demanded. "Can't you tell your wife what she told you? If you can't, I have my opinion of her! Any woman who will tell a married man things he cannot tell his wife must be a queer sort, to say the least. She probably was trying to work on your sympathies. I saw you holding her hand even after she was in her car. Pity you couldn't have finished your love-making indoors."

Landry went right on reading, or pretending to read. I knew by the swollen veins in his forehead that he had heard every word I had said and that he was becoming angry.

"Did you hear me? I asked you to tell me what that woman was crying about."

"And I gave you all the answer I thought necessary."

"Well, you may think you can fool me; but you can't! I'll do something some day that will make you sorry you didn't give me your confidence."

"So you were still watching and listening when Mrs. Hyde left, were you?" Landry asked, ignoring entirely my last remark.

"Yes, and I will listen and watch whenever that woman comes here!" I screamed, almost beside myself.

I began planning for the holidays. Landry had said he positively could not leave New York, and mother and father felt they could not leave home, so I had invited Margaret and Warren to visit us. They had accepted and I was planning no end of good times for them. I hoped that Landry would feel it his duty to be with us, and I looked eagerly for their coming.

To my surprise, Homer Carleton called me on the telephone.

"When did you arrive?" I asked him.

"Just now! not five minutes ago. What are you doing to-day?"

"Nothing in particular, why?"

"Come on down town and lunch with me! Bring Landry along if he can leave his patients long enough."

"All right, I'll come! I won't answer for Landry. He isn't very dependable, you know."

"As long as you come I sha'n't grumble. Shall we lunch at Harridges?"

"That suits me all right!" I replied. I recalled once hearing Homer say he liked it there, and so thought to please him.

"One o'clock, then, at Harridges."

Our luncheon was delightfully planned, as were all meals with which Homer had to do. The restaurant was full and many of the people he either knew personally or knew who they were. He pointed them out to me, making quaint interesting remarks as he did so; or giving me information as to their success if they were public characters.

"What shall we do now?" he asked, as we rose from the table.

"Whatever you say," I returned. I felt exhilarated. I didn't want to go home, and meant what I said. E

It was a perfect day, just enough tang in the air to make out-doors desirable. So when he proposed that we take a drive through the park and out in the country, I gladly acquiesced.

"Well, how goes it?" he asked as we rolled along the smooth driveway in the park. "Is the doctor's practice growing?"

"Yes; he is doing very well," I replied, sorry he had spoken of the one subject which never failed to annoy me.

"And does he still treat that handsome woman for her ills—or fancied ills?"

"What handsome woman?" I asked, pretending ignorance.

"Whew, are there so many? That woman, whose husband raised a row on the roof."

"Oh, you mean Mrs. Hyde! Yes, she is still a patient." My tone showed that I resented the fact.

"You aren't any more in love with her than you were then, are you?" Homer quizzed.

"I care nothing about her in any way," I replied stiffly, and then tried to change the conversation. But Homer was intent upon the subject and continued:

"I told you to look out for Landry; you see I was right."

"I see nothing of the kind; and why should I look out for him?" Homer's evident willingness to believe Landry easily fascinated by Mrs. Hyde had aroused my wifely opposition.

"Oh, nothing!" but he laughed in a way that showed he saw through my denial.

The early twilight was closing in upon us before we turned back toward the city. As we entered the park on our return it was shadowy, and in some places, where

the trees overhung the drive, nearly dark. Just as I was about to make some remark about it, Homer, with a suddenness that took my breath, leaned over and kissed me.

"What—why—how dare you!" I said drawing away from him.

"You looked so sweet, so alluring in this half light, I couldn't help myself. Forgive me, dear; is it such an awful thing for an old friend to kiss you? If you could see yourself you wouldn't blame me. Why, that Hyde woman is plain compared to you. In my eyes anyway, if she isn't to others."

I tried to be angry, but his compliment, his veiled reference to Landry's fondness for Mrs. Hyde prevented. Was it, after all, such a crime to let him kiss me? Was it any worse than for Landry to be shut up in his office with his patients, or with Miss Hopkins? How did I know that he did not kiss them. Men are all alike, I thought bitterly.

"You must promise never to do it again, if I forgive you," I said, trying to speak lightly. I would not have him know that I attached too much importance to his act.

"I promise—until the next time. But seriously, Sybil, you shouldn't be so fascinating."

"Why should you claim I am fascinating, and at the same time imply that Landry is attracted by another woman?" I queried, still speaking in the same light tone.

"Some men care only for a woman so long as she is something of an enigma to them. A wife is never an enigma——"

"And so never interesting!" I interrupted. "Thank you, Homer."

"I didn't say that was the case with Landry. You wouldn't allow me to finish."

"The inference was plain."

"Don't be cross, Sybil! I have had a perfect afternoon, don't let's spoil it," he answered in the boyish way which was one of his greatest attractions.

"I'm not cross, Homer, and I have no slightest intention of spoiling your afternoon, or my own either. You have given me a lovely time, and I appreciate it more than you know."

"Thank you, Sybil," he returned very soberly, and taking my hand he laid it on his lips just as we drove up to the house.

"Aren't you coming in?" I asked, as we stood on the sidewalk talking.

"No, thank you! I have an engagement for dinner and must hurry back to the hotel to dress."

"Landry told me to ask you to run up while you were in town if you could spare the time," I said to him. In some way I was unaccountably embarrassed at delivering Landry's simple message.

"Tell him I certainly will do so. I'll telephone you in the morning. There he is now. I'll stop and speak to him."

As he finished speaking, I saw a peculiar look cross Homer's face. I looked around and Mrs. Hyde was coming down the steps. For the first time I noticed a car drawn up to the curb a short distance from the house, which I now recognized as belonging to her.

"Is that you, Homer?" Landry called, as her car rolled away. Neither Homer nor I had spoken since Landry had appeared in the doorway.

"Yes, how are you?" Homer called in reply.

"Same as usual," Landry replied, as he reached the

sidewalk and extended his hand. "Aren't you coming in?"

"Not to-night. May see you some time in the next day or two."

"Do! Come up and dine with us."

"Thanks, awfully!" and with another gay good night to me he drove away.

"Did you and Homer have a pleasant afternoon?" Landry asked, as we went into the house.

"Yes, as pleasant, probably, as did you and Mrs. Hyde," I answered. I was annoyed with myself the moment the words had left my lips, and at the same time I was almost hysterical.

"Still harping on the old theme. I hoped you would return in a pleasanter frame of mind," Landry replied.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE next morning I found that I needed some silk of a particular shade, and as Bridget was too busy to mind Randolph, I went down in the office and told Miss Hopkins to get it for me. The needle shop was just around the corner and I never dreamed she would refuse so trifling a request—order, rather.

"I cannot leave the office, Mrs. Jones," she said in that quiet tone of hers I so disliked.

"And why not, I'd like to know?" I demanded haughtily.

"It is in my care."

"I will see that it is still here on your return."

"Mrs. Jones, I am sorry to refuse your first request, but the doctor distinctly told me never to leave the office in his absence."

I recalled what Landry had said about absolute obedience, but it did not lessen my anger.

"But if I tell you to go?"

"I still shall have to refuse."

"Then you will no longer remain here in my house!" I replied, stung to the retort by her manner, which was so restrained and quiet; although her usually pale face had flushed crimson.

"That is for Doctor Jones and me to decide. However, I do not think you need be anxious about the length of my stay, Mrs. Jones," and she turned away, resuming some work I had interrupted.

When Landry came in that night she had gone. I

gave him Homer's message about coming to dinner and we discussed the menu for a moment.

"That fellow is such a gourmet one must have something fairly decent," he had replied when I asked what we should have. "Why not ask Miss Hopkins up? It would make an even number, and we might have a game of bridge afterward."

"Ask Miss Hopkins! Not as long as I am mistress of this house!" I exclaimed. "The insulting creature!"

"What has happened now?" Landry asked, an expression of anxiety on his face. "I do hope you have done nothing to offend her. She has become almost invaluable to me."

"I do something to offend her! You don't seem to think it possible she might have offended me! Of course, I am always to blame."

"Well, what has happened?"

"I needed some sewing silk this morning. Bridget was busy and couldn't sit with Randolph so I could go after it, and I went down in the office and asked her to go."

"Her!—who?"

"Why, your Miss Hopkins, of course."

"I told you she was not your servant."

"I should think she might have been obliging enough to do a little thing like that," I contended.

"What did she say?"

"That you had told her never to leave the office in your absence."

"I did tell her just that. What did you say to her?"

"I told her if she refused she couldn't stay in my house."

"You—said—that—to her? What reply did she make?"

"An impudent one, of course! She said that was for you and her to decide, but she also added that I needn't worry, she would not be here much longer."

I had been sewing while I talked, but now I looked up and was almost frightened as I saw Landry's face. He was purple with anger, and the veins on his forehead seemed stretched to bursting.

"You will beg her pardon the first thing in the morning," he said hoarsely.

"I'll do no such thing!"

"Then I will move my office in an office building, and you will either board or go home to your mother. I cannot afford to keep this house and an outside office—not yet."

"You mean that unless I apologize to her you will send me away?" I asked, incredulous. "How you must hate me and love her."

"I mean just that! You have till morning to think it over," and although dinner was on the table, Landry put on his coat and hat and went out. Not only that, but he did not return that night. About nine o'clock some one from the hospital telephoned that I should not expect him.

If I had hated Miss Hopkins before, my feelings toward her after Landry delivered his ultimatum can be imagined. I was to apologize or he would send me away. What further proof did I need that he was in love with her?

The next morning Landry was at breakfast when I came in. At once he put down his knife and fork and asked:

"Have you decided?"

"Decided what?" I wanted to gain time.

"To apologize to Miss Hopkins."

"Did you really mean what you said, Landry?"

"I most certainly did!"

"And rather than lose Miss Hopkins, you prefer to lose me."

"Yes—under the circumstances. I have endured your unreasonable jealousy ever since we were married; it has got to stop; at least as far as it affects my work."

"Always your work!"

"Are you going to apologize to my nurse?"

"Oh, if you insist I suppose I must!"

"I hope you will be as gracious as possible. Miss Hopkins keenly feels the dislike you have taken to her—for no cause whatever."

"If I have got to do it, come along and have it over!" I retorted angrily, and then rushed down the stairs ahead of him and into the office.

"I am sorry that you misunderstood me the other day, Miss Hopkins," I said with all the dignity I could command. "I did not know the doctor had forbidden you to leave the office and supposed it would be as safe with me as with you."

"Please don't say any more, Mrs. Jones, it was a misunderstanding all around."

I was only too glad to be let off so easily, and so, before anything more could be said, I muttered some sort of an answer and hurried out of the room.

As I climbed the stairs I trembled so I could scarcely walk; trembled with anger. I should have liked to hurt Miss Hopkins—physically. My hands clenched until the nails pierced my palms. I rushed to my room, locked the door and paced back and forth until I was so weary and so worn with my outraged feelings that I threw myself on the bed and remained there until Bridget called me to luncheon.

Later on in the day I dressed for the theater and then sat down to wait impatiently for Landry. He had said he would be late, and I had laid out his clothes for him. About seven o'clock, when I was becoming so nervous I could not sit still, the telephone rang:

"There has been a bad accident in the subway, Mrs. Jones; they have brought some of the injured men here. Doctor Jones will not be home, but wishes you to spend the evening as you had planned." It was a nurse talking.

Tears of disappointment and rage filled my eyes. What would Homer think? He had planned to meet us in the lobby, and now I should have to go alone and stand around like some poor, neglected creature until he found me. I did not know where to find him, else I should have telephoned him. I almost decided to remain at home—but it meant a long, lonely evening, and I did want to see the play.

Then, too, Homer would likely take me to supper somewhere. And I had not been in New York long enough to be tired of the gay glitter and lights, and the interesting people one saw in the restaurants.

Fortunately he was on hand but surprised that I had come alone.

"Where is the doctor?" he exclaimed after some time, squeezing my hand.

"Oh, a subway accident! Some of the men were taken to the hospital. It's always something," I replied, shrugging my shoulders.

"Poor fellows!" Homer returned. "I heard the newsboys crying an extra, and bought one; it was a nasty accident."

We had a box, and I enjoyed every minute of the play. Homer was most attentive and between the acts laughed

and chatted entertainingly. Two men whom he knew came into the box—"to be introduced to me," he grumbled after they left. Charming, easy-mannered men they were; and I felt flattered at Homer's remark.

As I had expected he would, Homer suggested going somewhere for supper. I immediately acquiesced and told him I had eaten no dinner.

"Why, you poor dear, you must be starved!" he bantered.

"I am!" and really I was hungry. My indignation against Landry had vanished in the delight of the evening, and as I was very healthy and usually ready for my meals I felt the loss of my dinner.

"Where shall it be?" he asked.

"Oh, let's go to Perry's to-night! I have been there but once, and I just adore it."

"Perry's it is!"

Homer was evidently known here, as well as in the other places we had visited with him; and we were soon seated at a choice table, from which we could see everybody in the room.

I heard Homer give a little gasp of surprise, and Mr. and Mrs. Hyde took a table near us.

"Isn't that Landry's beautiful patient?" Homer asked.

"Yes; but keep your eyes at home!" I replied carelessly. "Couldn't I go anywhere that that woman didn't follow me!" I thought childishly.

"No danger of my doing anything else when you are with me—and that ogre of a husband with her." Homer laughed.

"She is lovely," I remarked.

"Indeed, she is! I would study medicine to-morrow if I thought my patients would look like her," Homer

replied carelessly, then commenced chatting of other things. But his careless words, combined with her radiant loveliness, had done their work. Now all I thought of was Landry and his patients. The gorgeous room, the delightful supper, Homer, the people around me amounted to nothing! It was only Landry who counted. And his profession brought him in such close contact with such beautiful women that even his men friends envied him.

"Horning has never seemed the same since Louisa Lawrence killed herself," Homer said, shocking me by the mention of her name. "Some way the young people don't seem to get over it. And you should see her father and mother. They look twenty years older. It was a terrible affair."

"Has anyone ever given a reason—that they knew to be true?" I asked. My voice trembled a little, I couldn't help but recall what she had said to me.

"No—there is not any positive reason. It has been hinted that she might have had some sort of a love affair; but there was nothing to prove it."

"I think she had," I said deliberately. "In fact, I know she did," I added. "She told me so."

"She told you so?" Homer asked in amazement.

"Yes, of course, you won't mention it; but several weeks before she died she told me she loved someone."

"Have you any idea who it was?"

"Of course not," I prevaricated.

"Must have been a married man or something like that. There must have been some reason why a lovely girl like Louisa had to give a man up if she cared for him."

"Probably."

"Poor Dwight! Do you know, Sybil, he is a changed

man. Really strange as it may seem, he is far more likable than before. Of course, we all knew he was in love with Louisa." Then, "But to return to what we were talking about, are you really happy?"

"Why, of course I am happy!" I replied, his tone making me uneasy.

"Not jealous of Landry and Mrs. Hyde?" he asked in a peculiar manner.

"Why should I be?" I parried.

"I hope you have no reason. But when I was here before I imagined you were." Then again, "I don't know as I blame you, she's a stunner!"

"Oh, Homer, how I wish Landry wasn't a doctor!" I burst out; his careless words had inflamed my jealousy so that I could keep quiet no longer. "The way the designing creatures come to the office and stay shut in with him is absolutely disgusting. And that office nurse of his, with her high and mighty ways, her insolence, is almost more than I can endure. There! I feel better," and I laughed a bit shamefacedly. "It has been a relief to get it out of my system, Homer. Please forget my outburst."

"Of course, I will, you dear," and Homer laid his hand over mine.

When he left me at the door it was with a promise to see me again in a week or two. Landry had not yet come in, but arrived before I finished undressing, too tired to pay any attention to my animated description of my evening.

Next morning, however, he evinced more interest.

"Tell me," said he, "about last night, Sybil; did you have a good time? I was so tired when I came in I didn't hear what you said."

"Oh, yes, I had a perfectly lovely time. The play was splendid, we had a box as usual, and then we went to Perry's for supper, and——"

"Had a fine supper I'll be bound, if Homer ordered it," Landry interrupted.

"Indeed we did! perfectly delicious."

"See any one you knew?"

"No—no one that I knew," I said with emphasis, as I remembered that Mrs. Hyde was there.

"Why the emphasis?"

"Your friend Mrs. Hyde was there."

"Oh, Sybil, can't you even tell of a good time without allowing those utterly mistaken feelings of yours to creep out? Was she with a party?"

"No, just that beast of a husband."

"He didn't make a scene again, did he?"

"No! You appear very much interested. Homer told me he expected to be in New York a good deal now," I said, changing the subject.

"That will be nice for you. He'll take you out occasionally, I know," Landry answered with perfect good nature.

Was he utterly lacking in love for me that he could so calmly talk of another man's attentions to me? Or was it that he trusted his own power over me to such an extent that he wasn't afraid of any one else?

I wondered which of these things his indifference augured.

It was a long time before I found out.

One morning I called downstairs and asked Miss Hopkins if she would come up and sit with Randolph.

"I shall be delighted to take him downstairs and look after him," she replied. "But you know I cannot hear either the telephone or the office bell up there."

"He is asleep, I do not wish him to be disturbed," I told her.

"I think I could carry him down without disturbing him."

"No! I won't have him wakened. He'd be cross the rest of the day. You will have to come up here, or I shall remain at home."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Jones, but I cannot leave the office."

"What is it, Sybil?"

Landry had come in unobserved by either, and it was his quiet voice which startled us.

"Oh, nothing of any consequence! I simply asked Miss Hopkins to sit with Randolph, as Bridget was out, and she refused, that's all."

"But, Mrs. Jones, I told you the reason. Please do not think me so unaccommodating. I told Mrs. Jones I couldn't leave the office, as I could not hear the bell upstairs."

"And quite right. But I shall be in for an hour, so run along, Sybil. I'll tend the office, and Miss Hopkins will be able to watch Randolph until Bridget comes in."

That night Landry promised to help me to select a wedding gift for Janet Hedler who was to be married. I was quite foolishly excited over the fact, as he hated the shops and it was very seldom he could be persuaded to visit them. I planned, without saying anything, to select a few Christmas presents at the same time. Once I got him into a store, I would persuade him to help me decide on something appropriate for Dwight and father, and perhaps one or two others.

But, of course, the principal purchase was for Janet. I wanted something a little unusual as well as nice if I could find it. We started out in great glee. I was so

delighted to have Landry with me that I chatted all the way down in the car "like a magpie." At least that was what Landry said.

When we finally reached the silversmith's, I was so confused with the numberless lovely things, any one of which might be appropriate, that I was silenced. Landry laughed at me and said:

"Come, dear, you must get busy. You know, I haven't all day."

"Don't hurry me!" I replied. "You can take an hour or two with me, I guess."

I finally selected, with Landry's approval, a nest of silver platters, three. They cost more than I had expected to pay, but Landry said:

"If you like them, take them! Janet isn't going to be married every day, you know."

Landry had glanced at his watch several times. As soon as I had given orders to have the platters marked, he said:

"I must hurry now, Sybil. If you have anything more to do, stay down and do it."

"But, Landry! I had planned to get some Christmas presents while you were with me."

"It's impossible for me to stay with you! Get what you like, I'll be satisfied."

"It isn't that; I thought it would be so nice to have you help me select them. It's so seldom you shop with me."

"Can't to-day!" and after a few more words he hurried away.

We had been standing near the door, and I watched him as he mingled with the crowd on the sidewalk, a little thrill of pride because of him stirring me as usual. Then I saw him raise his hat and turn toward the curb.

I changed my position, going nearer the door that I might the better see him; just as the door of a big limousine opened and Mrs. Hyde extended her hand to him. They talked a moment; then he stepped into the car and off they went.

I stood as if rooted to the spot. Landry had no more time to shop with me, but plenty of time to ride with Mrs. Hyde. Tears came into my eyes, a lump in my throat. My Christmas shopping, everything was forgotten save the fact that Landry had left me and gone with another woman, and that woman Mrs. Hyde, the patient of whom every one said I should be jealous.

I would not finish my shopping, in fact I could not. I hurried out of the store and started up the avenue. It was a cool, brisk morning. I would walk home. It would be easier than facing people in a car.

I asked for Landry immediately I got in.

"The doctor has not yet returned," Miss Hopkins told me.

I did not see him until dinner time. Then he came up the stairs whistling.

"Well, did you do all your errands?" he asked, as we sat down to dinner.

"No, I didn't do any of them," I answered shortly.

"Wasn't that foolish? We may not have many such days as this."

"It was a lovely day for a drive," I said sarcastically.

"Um—what's that?" Landry asked, giving me a puzzled look, which didn't in the least deceive me.

"I said it *was* a lovely day for a ride," I repeated. "Especially for a man who is so busy he cannot remain a moment longer with his wife. Being busy depends a good deal upon whom you are with, I fancy."

"Oh, I see! You are talking of Mrs. Hyde. She

kindly offered to take me to the hospital. I accepted. Have you any fault to find with that?"

"Yes, I have! I asked you to stay with me and you made all sorts of excuses. But the moment another woman asks you to go with her you accept with alacrity."

"Be sensible, Sybil. I was later than I meant to be and by accepting Mrs. Hyde's offer to drop me at the hospital I saved considerable time."

"Also you enjoyed yourself."

"Perhaps!" and neither of us spoke again through the dinner. My day had again been spoiled by Mrs. Hyde. What should I, what could I do to make her keep away from Landry?

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOMER CARLETON had evidently determined I should not forget him; for ever since his visit I had received an occasional box of flowers. Instead of hiding them or who the sender was from Landry, I boasted of the attention and praised Homer's thoughtfulness.

To be honest, I cared nothing for adventure; not because I thought adventure held no interest, but because I loved Landry so passionately that nothing which excluded him held me. There could have been a revolution, but so long as Landry was with me I should not have given the upheaval a thought. Nothing affected me save as it touched him.

It occurred on my way to visit Janet. I rode up in the subway, as I had little time to remain with her. As I emerged from the tube and glanced about me, I felt my heart bound, then shrink, as I saw a couple seated in a touring car apparently absorbed in each other. The fleeting glance had shown me Landry and Mrs. Hyde. She was wrapped in expensive sables, and even in that moment I could see that she looked charming. Landry was bending toward her, a smile on his lips, and with eyes for nothing about him.

The surge of rage which possessed me once they were out of sight almost swept me off my feet. Then I remembered where I was, and that I had started to visit Janet. But now that was impossible. I did not care to tell what I had seen, and it would be too hard to talk of other things with my mind full of it.

I crossed over and took the tube back home. When

I reached my room it was little comfort to find a box of exquisite flowers from Homer. My first impulse was to throw them out. Then I remembered my determination to use Homer, his gifts, as a weapon; and carefully I put them in water and disposed them about the room. Then I sat down, my arms outstretched on the table. My teeth were clenched, my jaw set, with the indomitable purpose to hold my husband, no matter to what depths of deceit or intrigue I descended to do so. His ambition was nothing, meant nothing to me. I cared nothing for either wealth or position—without his entire devotion. And I had long known that I was not only not gaining more of his love, but that I was going backward, losing ground.

As I sat there waiting for Landry to come in, I visualized scene after scene, one more distressing than the other: I imagined Landry making love to his handsome companion, saying the gallant little things of which he was past master and which I so seldom heard now, but for the omission of which I never thought of blaming myself.

I wondered what sort of woman Mrs. Hyde was, what her most vulnerable spot. I had a shrewd suspicion that she feared society, that Mrs. Grundy's criticisms would be hard for her to bear. Yet I could do nothing in that direction. I knew no one of prominence save Janet, and she knew and liked Mrs. Hyde.

I was almost in a state of collapse when Landry came in.

"So you're back at last, are you?" I almost screamed at him. It was absolutely impossible for me to control myself—at least, so I thought.

"Why, I'm not late, am I?" Landry looked at his watch, then, with a bewildered expression, at me.

I paid no slightest attention, but raved on without telling him the cause. Landry looked distinctly non-plused. I saw he had no idea of what had so upset me.

Finally, when I stopped long enough to give him a chance, he asked:

"If you haven't entirely lost your common sense, will you please tell me what you are talking about? I confess I haven't the slightest idea."

"Oh, it is easy for you to pretend! easy to play the innocent. But I won't be fooled any longer; nor will I allow her husband to remain in ignorance of your goings on!" I replied in excited tones. Billingsgate came easily when I was angry, so easily that I myself sometimes wondered where I had learned to use it so fluently.

"To what are you referring?" His tone was cold and hard as ice.

"To your clandestine meetings with that Hyde woman! I suppose you thought no one would see you in that part of town."

"May I ask who was your informant?"

"You can't lie out of it, so don't try! I saw you myself."

"I had no intention of attempting to deny anything I have done. Why should I? That I am unfortunate enough to have married a woman who isn't above spying upon me at all times and in all places has long been evident. I have no excuses to make."

I had not spied upon him, and his unconscious injustice made me the more bitter. That I did it continually did not excuse him to me for accusing me the once I had not done so.

His cool disregard of my outburst, his refusal to explain anything he had done drove me almost frantic.

"If you won't make excuses I know someone who

will!" I stormed. "I'll take particular pains to inform Mr. Hyde of the things I know!"

Landry turned white as chalk.

"You will do nothing of the kind," he spoke in the even, cold tone he used when terribly angry, and the veins in his forehead filled to bursting as the blood rushed back when he spoke.

"And why not, I'd like to know?"

"Because I forbid you."

I laughed long and loud. That I was hysterical, Landry, of course, knew; but he also knew, or seemed to know, that in the mood I was then in I was capable of doing anything I had threatened.

"I'll show you, too, that other men admire me whether you do or not!" I added inconsequentially. Landry had not looked at nor spoken of the flowers I had taken such pains to arrange for his benefit, another reason for complaint.

"Their admiration would probably cease did they learn to know you better."

"At least I can try them and see!"

"Do so—if you like. Anything, only leave me in peace," he answered wearily, his paleness returning.

"Will you promise me never to see or to speak to that Mrs. Hyde again if I don't tell her husband that you meet her and take long rides with her on the sly?"

"No, indeed! I shall make no promises whatever. And I never do things on the sly. I leave that to you. I suppose you happened to see me driving with Mrs. Hyde to see a sick woman in whom she is interested, and wished me to examine—diagnose her case."

"I expected you would have some such explanation! I suppose you and she fixed it up in case you were caught. I shall tell Mr. Hyde. We'll see if he is such

a softy as to be taken in by your specious excuses. He doesn't look as if he would be easy."

"I forbid you to speak to Mr. Hyde about me or anything concerning my profession. You do it at your peril."

"And you won't promise me not to see her again?" I asked, beginning to weaken, as I always did, when Landry took that tone with me.

"Absolutely not! We'll say no more about it," and, turning, he left the room. In a few moments I heard him laughing heartily at something Miss Hopkins was telling him. I gritted my teeth and muttered:

"She's another! I'll get rid of them both—some way."

Does it seem strange that I can calmly recount this page in my life? That I can deliberately set down all that was unlovely, and unlovable in my character? Did I not do so, my story would not be true, and it is a true story I am writing; not one in which I gloss over my faults and failings; and tell only the pleasant, agreeable things.

It is not a pleasant thing for me to look back and recall all that I have written, that I am about to write. At times I feel the flush of shame creeping over my face; and my heart grows sad and heavy as I remember all that has past.

CHAPTER XXIX

As I have said before, I cared nothing for money for money's sake, and could I have had the attention I deemed my right, if Landry would have given me his time and the devotion I wanted, I would willingly have lived the simplest of lives.

Of course, I always had loved pretty clothes and dainty surroundings. What girl doesn't? Yet I never had craved the expensive, elegant things of life. But if they would help in holding Landry, why I could be extravagant as well as any other woman.

These impressions had not yet taken practical shape when Margaret and Warren came to visit us. Her tastes were so simple; she was so gay and contented that I hesitated to either say anything of what I was thinking or to purchase expensive materials.

Margaret was delighted with the shops, and the big department stores; she never had been in New York before, and was as eager and as pleased as a child with everything she saw. She was going to do her Christmas shopping early, as her gifts for her father and mother and to some of her "girls," as she called them, would need to be sent early. Father and mother had planned to spend the day with Aunt Ellen and Uncle Ned, so we would make one parcel of our gifts for them.

"I don't think I could have left had they not planned to be together," Margaret said. "I could not have enjoyed myself, knowing them lonely and alone."

I had been particularly annoyed with Margaret's admiration for Miss Hopkins, but when a little while after

she saw Mrs. Hyde and went into ecstasies over her I lost patience.

I had heard the honk-honk of a motor, and had gone to the window. When I saw that it was Mrs. Hyde's limousine, I made a little disgusted noise that brought Margaret to my side.

"What are you looking at? Oh, what a lovely woman!" she exclaimed, not waiting for an answer to her question. "Who is she, Sybil?"

"One of Landry's pet patients."

"Oh, but she is beautiful, and how extravagantly she is gowned. In such perfect taste, too. And what a lovely car! But she would have to have a fine nest for all those fine feathers." In all her enthusiastic praise of Mrs. Hyde there had been no note of jealousy, not even of longing.

"You are very enthusiastic."

"Why shouldn't I be? I never have seen so lovely a creature. Is she ill? She doesn't look delicate."

"She pretends to be ill so that she can run after Landry!" I said bitterly.

"Oh, Sybil! you don't really believe that? You are jealous, I believe. I hoped you'd have no reason in New York."

"No reason in New York! Why, Margaret, these New York women are ten times worse than small-town women; ten times as dangerous. Do you know any woman in Horning over whom you would rave as you just did over that Mrs. Hyde? I tell you it is impossible to help being jealous, if one cares anything for a man with women like her running after him!" I said, all the time wondering how I was going to get to the stairs to listen when I heard her leaving.

"Not if you trust the man, and surely you have learned to trust Landry by this time."

"I trust him less than ever. There's no use talking about it, and making you unhappy over my worries, but I know he and that Mrs. Hyde are having some sort of an affair. You can see for yourself that she's not ill, and she comes here regularly. Not only that but they sneak off together. Oh, I know what I'm talking about!" I added, as Margaret made a gesture of dissent. "I've caught them."

Margaret looked horrified as I finished. Then said quietly:

"You remember, Sybil, you are naturally inclined to be jealous of Landry; why, you were even suspicious of poor little me," she laughed a little.

"But he is so handsome, Margaret."

"Yes, Landry is handsome, but so are quantities of other men. That woman didn't look like a person who would carry on a vulgar intrigue; and I can't believe that Landry would."

"I don't believe; I know."

That evening Margaret again spoke of Mrs. Hyde. That she regretted it immediately was perfectly plain, as she flushed and looked embarrassed.

"Where did you see her?" Landry asked in surprise.

"Out of the window."

"Oh!" was all Landry said, but his peculiar inflection told me that he understood that I was watching.

"She is very lovely!" Margaret stumbled on, "and doesn't look ill at all."

"She is ill. There isn't much I can do for her; but I hope I shall help her in time."

A chill clutched my heart. Landry hoped to help her

in time. That meant that she would keep on coming to the office or that he would visit her at her home.

Then came the swift memory of that day when I saw them out riding together, their faces turned toward one another. Without stopping to consider, I blurted out:

"I don't believe she is ill."

"What in the world did you say such a thing for, Sybil?" Margaret asked as we went into the kitchen to prepare a rarebit.

"Because it is true. Her sickness is only a bluff, and as surely as I live the day is coming when I shall call it," I retorted quickly.

"Heaven help you, madame, if your husband does not love you, because of your foibles, instead of in spite of them," Margaret quoted. Then added, "Use your common sense, dear. I really think, in spite of all your nonsense, you have a little."

I couldn't help laughing at her delicious naivete. Her bit of diplomacy was so obvious. She would soften Jerome's adjuration to women which she had flung at me, by the innocuous ending of her speech.

So talking and laughing we called the boys—as we always designated our husbands—into the dining room.

"Margaret made the rarebit," I told them, "so you are sure of a good one."

The next day Margaret and I were lunching at Perry's when I heard some one say:

"This is fortunate! I always knew I was a lucky fellow!"

We looked up to see who was talking; and to my surprise Homer Carleton stood beside the table. He shook hands, then asked if he might sit with us. He had had no luncheon, and would order something simple so that we might finish at the same time.

We grew quite gay. Homer was in one of his most fascinating moods.

Luncheon finished, Margaret insisted on doing a little shopping, so Homer called a taxi to take me home.

"How goes it?" he asked, as we settled into our seat.

"How goes what?"

"Oh, everything," and, taking my hand he pressed it to his lips.

I flushed hotly. And in an embarrassed fashion tried to protest.

"I have tried to think of you only as a friend, Sybil, and perhaps if I knew you were perfectly happy I should have been more successful. But I have watched you—and Landry, and I know you are not happy; that you never will be with a man of his temperament. I have fought matters out with myself a dozen times. I have been tempted to come to you and beg you to leave him; to give up trying to live the unhappy life you are living because of his—actions. And——"

"Stop, Homer! what are you saying?" I exclaimed. Up to now I had sat silent, too stunned to resent what he had said.

"Yes, Sybil, I know only too well what I am saying; and that I am risking your friendship. I did not mean to say anything to you to-day; but why shouldn't I take you from a man who cares more for everything else than for you; who neglects you; and who gives others the attention he should bestow on you?"

Once again he took my hand, and, pushing back my glove, he pressed his lips to my wrist.

I knew only too well that I should have defended Landry; should have denied all criticism of him, but for the moment I could not. I was like a woman under a spell which could not be broken.

"You seem to have left one thing out of the question, Homer."

"What is that? I know you don't love me, dear—not yet; but I would teach you to in time if you would only give me a chance."

"That I love Landry," I answered his question, and paid no attention to what went after.

"But he is"—he stopped; a look of irresolution on his face. Then, "Will you drive through the park with me, Sybil? I have something I want to tell you—I shall not offend you," he added, as he read the hesitation in my face.

Various emotions were striving for the control. I nodded, and Homer gave the order to drive through the park. For a few moments we were silent. Then he began:

"Do you remember when I first came to Horning, Sybil? I was rather bored at first. The place, the people were all so different. But I soon found them wholesome; place and people, both. The very first time I met you, dear, I think I cared. But as I grew to know you better; as I taught you to drive a car, and spent hours with you it became an obsession with me. So much so that when you suffered because of your jealousy of Landry, I suffered with you. I am keeping nothing back; I know I have no right to tell you these things; but I must, so that you may understand. When finally I knew that he—your husband—neglected you, I nearly went mad. That anyone could have you and not worship you was beyond me. Would you have done better than I did? Would you have kept silent so long had you been a man, and in my place? A full-blooded man who loved desperately the woman he saw slighted? Answer me."

His voice, his strained manner were compelling. I

answered his question as lightly as I could, not because I wanted to; but because I felt that I must.

"How can I tell what a man would do, or what I should have done in your place?"

"You must have seen that I loved you! I tried to hide it from you for fear I would lose the sweet companionship a mere acquaintance gave me. But there were times when I could not control my feelings, when you must have known."

"Perhaps, Homer—when a woman's heart and mind are filled with the image of the man she loves she isn't keen to notice."

"Evidently not, if you didn't know that I cared for you!" This time he spoke bitterly. But in a moment he again used the same gentle, almost pleading tone he had used from the beginning:

"When you showed me so plainly that you loved Landry, I felt almost guilty that I loved you. And yet they tell us that love goes where it is sent," he said. "But when I also found out that you were unhappy I nearly went mad. I couldn't have you; and the man to whom you belonged neglected you; didn't appreciate the prize he had won."

"Homer, you must stop! I mustn't listen to you any longer——"

"Wait, dear, I am almost through. When you left Horning I was glad! Glad, I tell you! Had you not gone, I should have left uncle and gone myself. It was becoming more than I could bear, to see you every day, to watch your sweet face sadden; to know you were unhappy, and that I was helpless. I fought with myself continually. You remember the night I kissed you? It set my blood on fire for days. I realized my only safety was to keep away from you; not to see you. Yet

you drew me like a magnet. I had absolutely no strength to resist my desire to be with you."

I was trembling all over. I wanted to tell him to take me home, to show indignation; to say to him that he was mistaken about Landry; that it was not true that he neglected me; and that he cared for anyone else; but my mouth was dry, my tongue refused to form the words, and he went on:

"After you had been away a while I thought I had become strong enough to see you again, and I was anxious to know if you were happier in New York than you had been in Horning. So I came down and joined you that night on the roof garden. You recall what happened. Mrs. Hyde even then had caught your husband's attention. Even then you were beginning to be suspicious of her—and him. You were unhappy. For days and nights after I went back home I thought of you; the situation as I saw it, and what I could do. I seemed still so helpless. Then I came again, and again, each time I have seen more and more that you never will be happy with Landry Jones. I do not say that you would be happy with me for a while. But of one thing I am sure; you cannot go on like this."

The emphasis Homer put into "you cannot go on like this," gave me a terrific shock. I could hardly realize that it was me that he was talking to—talking treason toward everything I held most dear.

"Say no more, Homer. Drive me home, please." I felt that if I listened further I should go mad. Without another word he obeyed.

CHAPTER XXX

Two days later, Landry, at breakfast, announced that he would not be home for luncheon.

"Oh, why not?" I pouted.

"Mrs. Hyde is to be operated upon this morning, and I shall not be home."

"So she has consented," Margaret said.

"Yes, and it is due to him—Hyde—that she has. He is all broken up, or pretends to be."

Every little while all the morning, Margaret would speak of Mrs. Hyde, and wonder how she was getting along. Once I missed her, and she had gone down to the office to ask Miss Hopkins if she had heard anything.

We had been through our luncheon about an hour when Landry came in. He threw himself into a chair and said:

"The day of miracles is not past."

"What do you mean?" we chorused.

"That I have just witnessed a modern miracle."

"Mrs. Hyde"—Margaret suggested.

"No! Mr. Hyde."

"But is she all right? Was the operation a success? She is so lovely, I do hope she will get on."

"The operation was a wonderful success, and she rallied almost immediately. It was marvelous but it was because of him."

"Oh, do tell us all about it, Landry! I am eaten up with curiosity," Margaret urged.

"Well, listen to the story of the modern miracle,"

Landry commenced in a mocking tone, which quickly gave way to his usual earnest, and sympathetic voice. "Last night Mrs. Hyde told me she had consented to an operation simply because Mr. Hyde had begged her to. He had seen Doctor Ward and had his opinion as well as mine. He was so insistent that she finally promised. And now for the miracle. He gave her his sacred promise, a written promise, that if God would spare her life he would never touch a drop again as long as he lives: but would devote the remainder of his life in trying to atone for all that he had done to cause her unhappiness."

"Do you suppose he will keep his promise, that he can keep it?" Margaret asked.

"Yes—I think he will keep his vow," Landry said slowly. "He has not touched a drop since he knew she would consent to the operation, and already he seems a different man. Yes, I believe he will be brave enough to keep his promise to make that little woman happy. You see, Doctor Ward was rather brutal. He told Hyde that she had hidden her injury because of her desire to save him, until it could be hidden no longer; and that broke him all up. He cried like a baby; and I really think he will be a changed man. Doctor Ward also put it up to him pretty strong that she would have to be very tenderly cared for the rest of her life. As soon as she is able to travel he is going to take her to California. She has entire faith in him; and thoroughly believes that he will keep his word. She must love him very dearly," he mused. "She has forgiven much."

Warren, who had been out for a walk, came in just then and Landry had to repeat the story for his benefit. He was just as interested as if he knew all the parties; just as sympathetic. Why couldn't I feel like the rest did? My principal thought was that if she went to Cali-

fornia, Landry wouldn't see her. She would have some other physician. But I said nothing of my thoughts, and occasionally joined in the conversation.

"Such men, if they do reform, are sometimes wonderfully changed," Warren said.

"Such faith as hers should be rewarded," Landry replied.

"Women are wonderful in their power to forgive," Warren added. "I wonder if there is anything a woman won't forgive if she really loves a man. I know we aren't inclined to be so lenient."

"You're right, Warren, men are selfish at best; while women are unselfish," Landry agreed.

"When will she be able to travel?" I asked.

"That depends upon how she gets along. I think soon, for she is so happy she will improve very fast once she commences."

"I suppose she'll take a nurse with her," Margaret said.

"Yes, she wanted Miss Hopkins, but I vetoed that. I told her I couldn't spare her."

"I didn't know Miss Hopkins was so necessary to you," I returned, trying to hide a sneer. "I, for one, wish you had let Mrs. Hyde have her."

Landry paid absolutely no attention to my sneering comment, but later, when Warren made some remark about the holidays, he regretted that he was to be so busy.

"Miss Hopkins wishes to visit her home, and so I shall be alone," he had said.

"Where is her home?" Margaret asked.

"Massachusetts, somewhere; I have forgotten the town."

I was delighted that she was not to be with us during

the holidays. But I was not quite so pleased when late the next day Landry came in with a parcel, and announced that it was for Miss Hopkins.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why, it's a little Christmas present. She won't be here to share anything with us, so I bought a little gift she could take with her."

As he talked he was undoing the package. It was one of the new ladies' suitcases, entirely fitted out with a set of white celluloid toilet articles. He even had gone to the trouble to have them marked with her initials in blue. The lining of the case was blue also.

"How lovely!" Margaret exclaimed, while I said nothing. I couldn't. I was too astonished and angry. The very idea that Landry should think of her at all was maddening; but that he should make her such a present—or any present at all—was inconceivable.

I had been so intensely jealous of Mrs. Hyde, and also had been so busy with Margaret that I had almost forgotten Miss Hopkins was in the house.

But now that Mrs. Hyde was in the hospital, all my old jealous fears were aroused.

"Does it please you, Sybil? Do you like it?" Landry asked, and I noted the eagerness in his voice.

"I don't see that it makes any difference to me," I answered coldly. Landry misunderstood. He thought I was hurt because he had not asked my advice before he purchased his gift.

"I bought it one day while you were laid up with your ankle. And I have been so busy I hadn't thought of it since until this morning, when she spoke of going."

"Don't apologize, it isn't necessary," I returned.

Landry looked keenly at me for a moment, then left the room with the case. I went to the head of the

stairs and listened. He had left the office door open, so I heard every word distinctly.

"It is beautiful, Doctor," I heard Miss Hopkins say, "and more than I deserve."

"Allow me to be the judge of that," Landry's voice answered. "If it pleases you, is what you want, I am repaid."

"It is not only what I want, but what I need. I was wondering only last night if I could afford a new one. My old one is quite shabby."

"And what did you decide?"

"That I couldn't afford it!" Then, as if she owed Landry some explanation, she went on in rather an embarrassed tone:

"You see, Doctor Jones, I take care of mother and an invalid sister. My sister was hurt when a small child and never has walked. So I must deny myself luxuries such as this." Her voice took on a note almost like a caress as she spoke of the case.

"You say your sister never has walked: how old is she?" Landry asked quickly, his professional interest aroused, and all else forgotten.

"She is eleven; and the dearest, most patient little thing in the world. You have no idea, Doctor Jones, how lovable she is."

"I may have more of an idea than you imagine," Landry said dryly, and even I, listening at the head of the stairs, could not mistake his meaning. "But tell me about her," he added.

"She was thrown from her carriage when a baby by a careless nurse. That was when father was alive. He died soon after. And she never has had the use of her limbs. She is perfectly normal in every way, as large as any delicate child of her age. She sits in a wheel

chair for a change and in nice weather she propels it up and down the sidewalk. We keep her outdoors all we can."

"Some day, when I can be spared, do you object to my going to your home and making an examination? We might be able to help her."

"No, indeed! I should be delighted," and her voice trembled. "You see, Doctor, that is one reason I became a nurse. I hoped to help Nina."

"Well, we shall see what can be done as soon as possible," Landry said cheerily; then Margaret called me and I heard no more. But I had heard enough. Landry's subtle compliment hadn't escaped me, any more than had his promise to go to her home.

The morning mail had been distributed. Landry had taken his down to the office, Margaret had gone to her room with a long letter from her mother; Warren had received none. I gave Bridget her orders for the day before I opened the only one I had received. The handwriting was unfamiliar, and I supposed it an announcement of some kind, so was not at all curious.

"Mrs. Jones" (it commenced): "Watch your husband. I have never met you so don't know that you care; but nurses are sometimes dangerous. You have one in your house he admires; and there's another at the hospital. It will be easy for you to find out who it is—if you care."

It was signed, "A Nurse."

I read the miserable scrawl over and over. Had I been like Margaret, I should probably have torn it up and thought no more about it. But I was not like Margaret; and instead of giving it the treatment an anonymous communication deserves, I commenced at once to plan to discover what nurse at the hospital was meant. There must be some one nurse whom Landry

favorable or the letter would not have been written.

With sudden resolve, I rose and crossed swiftly to the telephone. I knew Landry was in his office, so had no hesitation in calling the hospital.

"Is Doctor Jones there? If so, will you call him to the telephone, please?" I asked when the hospital answered.

"Doctor Jones is not here at present. Will you leave a message?"

"Is there any nurse who is—well, who takes a special interest in the doctor's work to whom I may speak?"

"Miss Jessop is out at present! I think she takes charge of many of Doctor Jones' patients. Will you leave a message for her?"

"No, thank you. I'll call again," and I hung up.

So her name was Jessop! A common name, surely. I congratulated myself upon my action in calling the hospital. I knew that those nurses would make love to Landry. I had been afraid of it even in the Horning Hospital. I recalled what Louisa Lawrence had said of the dangers of New York. Not only was I to have Landry's patients to fight; but the nurses.

"You have one in your house he admires."

I read this line over and over with ever-increasing anger. I knew something was wrong when he brought that designing creature to the house. I always called Miss Hopkins "a designing creature" in my thoughts, and sometimes when I spoke of her. Now I understood the suit-case. Of course he did not want me with him when he selected her Christmas present. Then I wondered what he had given Miss Jessop. How was I to find out; and how was I to see this girl or woman and find out what she looked like? Landry must be pretty bold when another nurse would warn me.

I put the letter carefully away. Why I saved it I couldn't have explained, for I knew every word by heart. "If you care," the writer had said. Care! Why I cared so much that my life was one long misery because of my jealousy.

About noon Warren and Landry came in together. They were talking very earnestly, and I listened.

"I hate to be responsible for anyone's losing a position," it was Landry who spoke; "but a careless nurse is not only impossible, but dangerous. She had made one or two mistakes before which I overlooked; rather for which I only reprimanded her. But this was beyond all forgiveness. Had we lost the patient through her carelessness, I should have felt the fault, the crime, was mine. Because, knowing what I did of her, I still said nothing and so endangered the lives of the patients who trusted us."

Who in the world was Landry talking about? I wished I knew; but perhaps he would speak her name. If he had discharged a nurse and I could get hold of her, she might, out of pique, tell me all about this Miss Jessop.

That I was planning to act a low part never even occurred to me. That I might ask Landry and have my curiosity satisfied, I never considered. He might tell me her name; but he would be sure to either question my motive in wanting to know; or make me promise not to mention what he had told me.

"You did perfectly right, Landry," Warren said. "You cannot afford at this time in your career—to say nothing of any humane side of the question—to have any accidents caused by careless nurses. Was she vindictive?"

"Very! She told me what she thought of me in pretty

strong language. You see, she found out that it was through me that Doctor Ward learned of her mistake. She didn't leave me a shred of decency by the time she got through with me."

"That's to be expected. I hope she will not try any tricks. A man or a woman who takes a discharge in that way is apt to become a menace."

"Oh, no! She isn't at all clever. No danger of anything like that."

CHAPTER XXXI

MARGARET and I had been out to market. It was a lovely day and we had prolonged our walk so that we did not get back until nearly noon. I went directly into the kitchen to see if my order had arrived, while Margaret went on upstairs.

"You was wanted, ma'am," Bridget said. "A lady—leastways she said she was, though I'm sure I never knowed no lady to talk like her."

"Did she leave a card?"

"It was on the telephone she wanted you, ma'am."

"Didn't she leave her name? What did she want?"

"She didn't leave no name, she said to tell you that the lady what wrote you a letter wanted to talk to you. And just because I didn't get her straight at first, she used back talk no lady ever used that I knowed."

"Was that all she said?" I asked, so excited that I paid no attention to Bridget's complaint, although usually she amused me.

"No, ma'am, she said as how she'd call you again."

"Very well. Did the vegetables for dinner come?"

"They's here; and she did call again, ma'am, about fifteen minutes ago."

"Any message that time?"

"No; she acted kinda mad like, and she said something that sounded like a swear word."

So the unknown had called me up; she had something to tell me so important she could not wait to write. What could it be, and why didn't Landry come in? It was luncheon time and I had suddenly made up my

mind to ask him about the nurses at the hospital; to show interest in them. I wanted to know their names, etc.

I knew I could not do the things in this big city hospital that I had done back home. The nurses and internes were not likely to gossip with me; nor to allow me to wander, without an excuse, even though I was the doctor's wife. Then even the orderlies were likely also unapproachable. I must get my information from Landry in some way; or wait for my unknown correspondent to communicate with me again.

I almost wished I had been a little more careful not to let Miss Hopkins see my dislike for her. She might have talked. But I couldn't count on her now. She would be sure to suspect something if on her return I should suddenly turn friendly.

"I may have to go away for a day or two," Landry exclaimed, breaking in upon my thoughts. "I have just had a letter from Miss Hopkins, and her young sister, the little invalid, has had a bad turn, and she is anxious about her. I told her, you remember, that I would run up and look the child over as soon as I could, and Doctor Ward is anxious I should go at once. Miss Hopkins won the liking of everyone at the hospital, Doctor Ward included."

"You mean that you would leave home now, when we have guests, and Christmas is almost here?"

"I can be spared now—and I'll be back for Christmas if I go," he replied simply—then turned and walked away, leaving me without speech in my astonishment. Late in the afternoon he returned and packed his bag before dinner. He had one call to make that evening; then would take the train without coming back home.

"I think this is totally unnecessary!" I fumed, as I

watched him lay his things in the bag. "I can't understand why you take such interest in that girl."

"A crippled child deserves——"

"I wasn't talking about the child! I was talking of your office nurse. She is certainly fortunate to have someone who is interested in her affairs to the extent you seem to be."

"Sybil, it can't be possible you object to my doing all I can for that little girl."

"You are doing it because of Miss Hopkins. That's why I object. You are altogether too much interested in her."

"Oh, Sybil! will you never learn, never cease to distrust me?"

"No! not so long as you give me reason!"

"I never have given you reason, but I might as well have done so. Do be sensible, Sybil."

Landry came back the next afternoon. He had examined the child, prescribed a diet, and after the holidays she was to be brought to New York to be operated upon, with every hope that it would be a success, and that she would be able to walk.

"Surgery, as a science, has so advanced since that old country doctor told them she would never walk, that cases like that, well nigh hopeless ten years ago, are often perfectly cured," Landry said to Warren.

I had been glad to see Landry, of course; glad that he had not remained longer with Miss Hopkins; but I had planned to make a surreptitious visit to the hospital that afternoon, and now it would have to be postponed.

I had remained in the house all the morning in the hope that the unknown woman would telephone me again, but I had heard nothing further from her. Perhaps she would write me again.

If she didn't I could do nothing until after Christmas, now only four days off. I would wait until after Margaret and Warren went home, and until after Janet's wedding. I should have more time then.

But I had made up my mind not to wait until after Christmas to try to get a look at that Miss Jessop at the hospital. It had flashed across me that I might take some flowers to Mrs. Hyde. It would give me an excuse to visit the hospital. I knew it was terribly hypocritical, that I disliked Mrs. Hyde, and didn't care if she never had a flower; but I could not rest until I saw Miss Jessop. I took the anonymous letter out and read it over again. It distinctly charged Landry with being attracted by this nurse, and also the writer knew of his liking for Miss Hopkins.

"I am going by the hospital this afternoon," I said to Landry at luncheon, "would you like me to take Mrs. Hyde some flowers?"

He looked his surprise, but fairly beamed as he replied:

"I think it would be a very gracious act."

"Very well, I'll stop at the florist's and get some roses or something."

Margaret, of course, went with me, but I thought I could manage to leave her in the reception room while I gave Mrs. Hyde the flowers.

When I reached the hospital and expressed a wish to see Mrs. Hyde, the nurse gravely informed me that it was impossible. That Doctor Ward had forbidden anyone to disturb her.

"Is Miss Jessop on duty?" I then asked.

"I believe so."

"May I speak to her, please?"

"Who is she?" Margaret asked when the nurse had left us. "I never heard you mention her."

"Oh, she is sort of head nurse or something!" I answered as carelessly as I could.

In a few moments the nurse returned, followed by one of the prettiest girls I ever had seen. A perfect blonde with a lovely skin and great serious eyes which looked straight at me with an inquiry in their depths.

"Are you Miss Jessop?" I asked, embarrassed by that regard.

"Yes, is there something I can do for you?" she replied in a soft, low voice.

"Will you please see that Mrs. Hyde gets these flowers from Doctor Jones?"

Why I should have said they were from Landry I do not know. It was just a sudden impulse. Margaret looked surprised as Miss Jessop said:

"Certainly!" and gave orders to the nurse who had called her: "See that Mrs. Hyde gets them please."

"What a lovely nurse!" Margaret exclaimed as we left the hospital.

"I do not care for such pronounced blondes," I replied. She had the same exquisite coloring as had Mrs. Hyde.

"Such wonderful eyes, too!" Margaret added. "And such a direct way of looking at one when she talked. I love to have people look straight at me."

I made no reply. I had seen Miss Jessop, that was all I cared. She might, or she might not, be the nurse mentioned in the letter; but, as I thought of her coloring, I concluded she was. Landry admired blondes. Even I was more light than dark.

We did a little shopping, and it was nearly dinner time when we reached home. Margaret ran gaily up-

stairs, but I waited a moment in the hall, arrested by voices, angry voices coming from the office.

"What right have you to give her flowers?" a thick, loud voice shouted. I could not hear the reply, although I listened for it.

"I'll show you that you can't flirt with my wife! You good-looking doctors all think you can do what you please, but I'll teach you not to meddle with me—damn you!"

Still I heard nothing, save a voice in reply; I could catch nothing.

"Give me your promise! your promise, I say!" the same hoarse voice again shouted.

There was silence, then a woman's scream, followed by a shot. I could not stir for a minute. I seemed rooted to the spot, then with a cry of "Landry!" I rushed into the office just as Margaret came running down the stairs, and Warren let himself in the front door.

"Landry! what is it? Who is in there?" I demanded as I tugged at the door.

"Warren, Warren, come here, quick! Something dreadful has happened!" I screamed, still tugging at the door, which now opened so suddenly that I was thrown forward into the office, followed by Warren and Margaret.

To my surprise, Miss Jessop, as white as a ghost, stood before me. It was she who had opened the door. Landry was bending over something on the floor. He looked white and shaken, but he spoke calmly enough:

"You and Margaret better go upstairs. Warren, help me lift him on the couch."

"Who is it? Is he dead?" I whispered loudly as Margaret tried to take me away.

"No! He's not dead," Landry replied. Then I

caught a glimpse of the man's face. It was the coarse, bloated face of James Hyde.

"Come, Sybil," Margaret said, taking my arm. I had swayed, and would have fallen had she not held me.

"Whom did he shoot—himself?" I demanded.

"He shot no one, Mrs. Jones, the pistol simply went off," Miss Jessop said, then added, "I am assisting the doctor until Miss Hopkins returns." I had shown my surprise at her presence so plainly I expect she felt obliged to explain.

"But I heard loud voices. He was abusing Landry!"

"Come, Sybil," and this time I allowed myself to be half led, half carried, up the stairs.

It was nearly an hour later when I heard a car stop before the house, and hastened to the window. I recognized, even in the growing darkness, that it was one of the Hyde cars. The chauffeur rang the bell, then Landry and Warren and Mr. Hyde went down the steps, they supporting him on either side. They helped him into the car, talked a moment with the chauffeur, then came in.

"Dinner is ready!" I called from the head of the stairs, careless that they caught me watching.

"Now, for heaven's sake, tell us all about it!" I exclaimed, as they appeared. "Margaret and I are nearly wild with anxiety and curiosity. I thought that man had reformed."

"So did everyone," Landry said dryly. "But it seems he hasn't. He was crazy drunk when he came into the office."

"What did he come for?"

Landry answered my question by asking another.

"Were you at the hospital today?"

"Yes, why?"

"Did you leave some flowers for Mrs. Hyde as you spoke of doing?"

"Certainly! That's why I went."

"What message did you send with the flowers?"

"My, what a lot of questions!" I returned. I had commenced to feel uneasy.

"Please answer me."

"Why I said—to—give—her the flowers," I stammered. Then:

"Why, no——" I answered more boldly. "I have never met her, you know, so I said that Doctor Jones had sent them."

"I see!" he said, musingly, then turned to Warren. "He was right after all, Warren. How in the world did you come to leave such a message? You came near causing a tragedy."

"What do you mean?" I demanded. I had fully recovered from my fright, and also from my nervousness.

"I mean just this! Mr. Hyde had backslidden. He had been drinking for a day or two pretty heavily. He happened to be in his wife's room when the nurse delivered your foolish message that the flowers were from me. He was immediately jealous, went out and has been drinking all the afternoon. He came here with blood in his eye, I can tell you. I tried to tell him that you sent the flowers, but he swore that he had heard the message. Then he demanded by what right I sent her flowers, and accused me of flirting with her. When I tried to calm him, to deny the impeachment, he drew a revolver and attempted to shoot me. But Miss Jessop saw his intention, and, as she stood behind him, she struck up his arm, and the thing exploded harmlessly. Then the fellow collapsed. He had a slight stroke, but

if he don't stop drinking he'll have another soon. He's too full-blooded to go on with booze the way he does."

"You see what it is to be a doctor's wife, don't you, Margaret?" I asked hysterically. "Landry might have been killed, and it would have been my fault." Yet it wasn't of that I thought, but of the words I had heard the drunken man speak just before I heard the shot:

"You good-looking doctors think you can do as you please!"

"But men in other professions are occasionally in danger," Warren interposed.

"But a doctor is always in danger—of some sort," I persisted. "And how in the world did Miss Jessop come to be with you?"

"She will take Miss Hopkins' place while she is away," he replied, in a tone that prevented more questioning before our guests.

CHAPTER XXXII

WHEN Landry returned from his morning visit to the hospital, he told us that Mr. Hyde was there, and had apologized.

"He is filled with remorse, and is going to try again. I never saw such sweetness, such patience as that woman exhibits toward that brute."

I wanted to say something cutting; something about his, Landry's, fondness for Mrs. Hyde; but I resisted. Through my jealousy I had almost caused a tragedy, for had I not been jealous of Landry I shouldn't have thought of giving Mrs. Hyde flowers, so would not have aroused Mr. Hyde's jealousy.

"Are they still thinking of California?" Warren asked.

"Yes, and this will hurry them. Mrs. Hyde is a wonderful patient, and——"

"It seems that Mrs. Hyde is wonderful to you in every way!" I interrupted, unable to longer keep still.

Landry was very quiet all through dinner, then immediately went out. I heard the doorbell ring, and the maid came to tell me a woman wished to see me.

"You are sure she asked for me, not the doctor?"

"Yes, ma'am, she said to tell you she had wrote you a letter."

Instantly I knew that it was the unknown woman, the writer of the anonymous letter.

"Show her into the living room, then come and take Randolph and put him to bed," I told her.

When Bridget had taken Randolph, I went in to my caller.

"I am Mrs. Jones," I told her.

"My name is Miss Smathers. I wrote you a letter the other day."

"Yes?"

"I thought perhaps you'd like to talk to me——"

I had taken a sudden dislike to the woman, although she was not bad looking by any means. But I had a feeling that she wasn't to be trusted. Her eyes were shifty, and she had a hard look.

"What about?" I asked, pretending.

"What else but what I wrote you?" she said impudently.

"Well?"

"I heard you was over to the hospital; and that you saw Miss Jessop."

"Yes."

"What did you think of her? Pretty, isn't she? At least the doctor seems to think so. He likes blondes, doesn't he? You're almost one."

I flushed at the woman's insolence, but as yet I had found out nothing new. I would swallow it until I did.

"I am a good nurse. We are all apt to make mistakes. I made one at the hospital, and Doctor Jones had me fired. I don't care anything for you, but I hate him. So I am going to put you on your guard. A handsome doctor thinks he can do anything he likes, and the fool women help him along. I don't say that there is anything—yet, between him and that Jessop girl, but you better watch out. But as for that Hopkins girl he has brought here in the same house with you, everyone knows he's in love with her. She was called

'Jones' pet' in the ward. I'll be honest. I'd give a lot to be even with him, and if you'll not give me away I'll let you know something about his goings on."

I was so disgusted with the woman, her coarseness, her impudence, that I was tempted to show her the door, but stronger than my disgust was my desire to know all she could tell me of Landry. So I replied:

"I surely shall not repeat anything you tell me, although I am quite sure you are mistaken. Things often look different from what they really are," I finished weakly.

"He's going to bring that lame sister of Hopkins' down here to be operated upon. They're as poor as church mice. I know for I come from that part of the country. You ain't rich. Does it stand to reason that he would do all this for nothing unless he was in love with Hopkins?"

"He's in love with his profession; and is always generous to the poor," I replied. A sniff was my answer. Then after a minute she said:

"Well, do you want me to keep you posted?"

"If—there's—anything," I stammered, hating myself for having listened to her.

"If there is anything!" Miss Smathers repeated with emphasis. "If there wasn't anything, what would I be doing here wasting my time?"

I said nothing, and she went on.

"Of course, I expect to be paid. Your husband got me out of a good position, and it's no more than right I should have something if I tell you things."

I began to be frightened. Why, this was blackmail! Yet, even so, I could not resist the impulse to learn all this woman knew.

"I haven't much money of my own; how much do you want?"

As I asked the question I heard the front door open and Margaret call:

"Where are you, Sybil?"

"Give me ten dollars tonight!" the woman said in a cynical whisper as I replied:

"Right upstairs, as usual." Then I hurried into my room, followed by Miss Smathers.

"Better not let too many see me," she said in a confidential manner, which was harder to bear than her impudence. "Isn't there a back way?"

I showed her the way down the back stairs, and told her to let herself out.

I was humiliated one moment and the next made excuses for my action in receiving and treating with a common blackmailer. In my heart I knew that was what Miss Smathers was. Then I would think of my suspicions, my jealousy of Landry, my desire to know if he were true to me, and feel that any means, no matter how degrading, was right to use until I was satisfied.

"Only two days more before Christmas," Landry exclaimed next morning at breakfast, "so if you girls have any more shopping to do you'd better attend to it today. The stores will be crowded tomorrow."

"Yes, and we have to finish trimming the tree!" Margaret added. "Shall we have our gifts"—she winked at me—"on Christmas eve, or the next morning?"

"Oh, in the evening!" I returned; "it is lots more fun when the lights are on."

There were one or two little things Margaret and I had to attend to, there always are at the last moment.

So directly after luncheon we started out. We visited one or two places, then went into one of the large department stores.

"Who in the world is that woman—that one in brown? She keeps looking over here. I believe she is trying to attract your attention," Margaret said.

I turned and at once recognized Miss Smathers. I bowed slightly, and moved away. I had no wish that my cousin should make her acquaintance, or come in contact with her in any way.

It was of no use. Miss Smathers came immediately up to me, and with an oily smile said:

"I suppose you are Christmas shopping?"

"Just odds and ends I haven't had time to attend to before."

"Shall I talk before her?" she asked, nodding at Margaret, who just then was looking at some goods and her attention occupied.

"No, indeed!"

"Very well. I had something to tell you, but——"

I moved a bit further along.

"What is it?"

"Have you seen the Christmas present your husband gave Miss Jessop?"

Just then Margaret turned and came toward us. I hurriedly said good-afternoon to Miss Smathers and we left the store.

"A peculiar looking woman," Margaret mused. "I don't like her face. Isn't it strange how people affect us, Sybil? I should hesitate to trust that woman; her eyes were absolutely shift."y."

"She's all right; only a casual acquaintance," I absent-mindedly responded. I did not care to discuss Miss Smathers with my cousin; and I was wild to know what

Landry had given Miss Jessop, and just why he should give her anything. Landry had explained that she was on her vacation, and, as she had no family, was willing to come to him as long as he needed her.

"Well, did you girls finish all your shopping?" Landry asked as we all sat down to dinner.

"Oh, yes! and now you boys must help us trim the tree. We'll have to get busy immediately dinner is over," I replied.

"I wish I had thought of it, we might have asked Miss Jessop to stay and help. I am sure she would have been pleased. She has no relatives, and Christmas must be rather sad for her."

"By gad, Landry! you were in luck that she happened to be in your office, and that she had presence of mind enough to knock up that madman's arm. He might have killed you."

"There is no doubt he would have tried," Landry said. "Miss Jessop is a wonderfully self-possessed girl. She never makes any mistakes or loses her head. She is one of our most efficient nurses."

"She certainly showed her coolness the other night," Warren added.

"I wish you'd ask her either to dinner, or up tomorrow night when we are all here together," Landry said, looking at me.

"Indeed I won't—why, Janet and Starr are coming. I'll have no nurse here to spoil our good times."

"I consider I owe my life to her," Landry said seriously.

"Yes, I do too; the man was crazy, ready to do anything," Warren said, much to my disgust. Why wouldn't they stop talking about her?

"I bought her a wrist watch, but it is a very small

mark of my appreciation. I wish I might do more," Landry returned. I knew he had reference to making her one of us for the holidays. That I should not do, not even for him. But—how in the world did Miss Smathers know about the watch?

"You bought Miss Jessop a wrist watch?" I repeated after Landry.

"Yes. It was the only thing I could think of that she could use."

"What kind of a watch?"

"Just a simple gold one on a link chain."

"You seem fond of making presents to women!" I sneered.

"But surely, Sybil, you would have had me show some appreciation for what she did?" Landry asked in a peculiar voice.

"No; I would not! Decidedly not! You don't need her here, anyway. It's all nonsense. I didn't know I had married a Mormon. She is the second woman you have given a present in the last month. How many more have you remembered in that way that I don't know about? Louisa Lawrence told me how it would be before she died," I stormed. "She said I would be a thousand times unhappier in New York than I had been in Horning, and she told the truth."

"Now see here, Sybil, you are acting and talking very foolishly. I had not intended to speak of it; but had you not sent in the message you did to Mrs. Hyde, the thing never would have happened. I don't see what possessed you to do it."

"So you blame me, do you?"

"I'm not blaming anyone. I simply told you that had you simply sent in the flowers in your own name Hyde never would have come here."

"I thought it would please Mrs. Hyde," I sarcastically replied.

Sometimes I have wondered if ever other women were as jealous and if they suffered from it as I did. I seldom cried, but I seemed to lose all control of myself. At times I thought it would be better if I could let Homer care for me, could interest myself in someone else so that I wouldn't care what Landry did, wouldn't mind his women patients. I recalled what Mr. Hyde had said in his drunken rage:

"You good-looking doctors think you can do anything you want to!" Always I had heard that men when drunk told the truth.

The next morning Margaret suggested that if we walked toward the hospital we might meet Landry. We decided to walk through the park, as Landry often came back home that way, and, because it was early and the sun shone brightly, we sat down on a bench to rest a while.

"There's that woman who spoke to you in the store," Margaret exclaimed.

"Oh, I hope she won't see us!" I said quickly. I did not want to talk to her. But she had seen us and was making her way directly toward us.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jones, may I speak to you a minute?" she asked, in a wheedling voice.

"Yes, what is it?" I asked coldly; then noticed with a shock that the woman had been drinking.

"I told you about the watch! I was with her when she showed it and told where she got it. Now do you want me to tell you something else?" and she leered at me. "If you do, you'll have to give me a Christmas present. No one gives me presents." The last a whine.

"What is it?"

I turned at the question. I had recognized Landry's voice, and wondered vaguely what Miss Smathers would say.

"Margaret and I were waiting in hopes you would come along—and——"

"What is it, Miss Smathers?" Landry interrupted me to ask. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"You can give me back my place in the hospital," her answer was surly.

"No, I can't do that! No nurse who drinks as you do can be trusted with patients."

"I'm not drunk. You don't dare say I am! If I was I'm no worse than you are, making love to every yellow-haired woman you see."

Landry eyed the woman pityingly and sighed, but he would not bandy words with her.

"Come, come!" said he, motioning to Margaret and myself, and for several minutes we walked along homeward without words.

CHAPTER XXXIII

JANET and Starr were married on Wednesday following Christmas. It was a lovely affair; and both looked so happy I felt a little twinge of envy.

After a trip to the coast they were to live with Janet's parents. The house was so enormous that they could live as separately as they wished, even though they were under the same roof. One entire floor had been done over for the bride, and the arrangement was ideal.

We were invited to the wedding breakfast, which was a small, cosy affair, and then we threw old shoes and rice after them when they left. Margaret was enthusiastic:

"I never had so nice a time at a wedding. They are usually sad, I think," she said to Mrs. Hedler.

"This wedding couldn't be sad. We are so delighted to keep Janet here. Then we are very fond of Starr. His father and Mr. Hedler have been friends for years."

Starr's mother had died when he was small, and his father had brought him up alone. The elder Mr. Jordan was a fine-looking gentleman, with the nicest old-school manners. I quite fell in love with him.

"That husband of yours will make his mark some day," he had said to me when he was presented. "He is very efficient, and I consider we were fortunate, indeed, to secure him on the hospital staff. Good surgeons are born, not made."

Even this old man had to intrude Landry's profession upon me. Was it always to be so? Was he always to be the doctor, instead of the husband.

After the holidays were over we were once more alone. Miss Jessop had left, and Miss Hopkins was back in her old place in Landry's office. She had brought her little sister down with her, and she was at the hospital. Nina had been put into a private room—I heard Miss Hopkins thank Landry, so I, of course, supposed he had taken the obligation upon himself. She would not be operated upon for about a week; she needed rest after her journey. I learned all this standing at the head of the stairs listening. Neither Landry nor I had mentioned the matter to each other.

The Hydes had left for California, much to my relief. Had I realized that it was not Mrs. Hyde, but my jealousy, that was to blame for the unhappiness she had caused me, I might have acted differently—I don't know.

The day Miss Hopkins came back Landry came in for luncheon. He was humming a new song under his breath, one we had heard at the theater during the preceding week. He looked up cheerfully and said:

"Lunch ready? If not, I'll run down to the office and do a little work."

"Stay here a moment," I said. But he remained standing. After a pause I said:

"I have borne a great deal from you, Landry, but there is a limit even to what I will endure."

"Meaning?"

"That you feel you have the right—because you——" I was going to say "love" but hesitated as Landry bent his glance upon me, "like Miss Hopkins," I amended, "to take upon yourself the burden of paying for her sister's room at the hospital. People like those should be put in the wards. If you have so much money you

don't know what to do with it, perhaps I might use it if I tried?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Oh, don't pretend! I heard Miss Hopkins thanking you for——"

"So, now that Margaret is gone, you were listening again. Oh, Sybil!"

"Yes, I was listening, and I will not endure the insult."

"What insult?"

"Making my home a place where you bring your——" I hesitated.

Landry's wrath blazed.

"What a rotten thing for you to suggest, Sybil."

"The truth is always disagreeable—when it is the truth about such things."

"But it is absurd! Miss Hopkins is merely a very competent nurse. She is valuable, and, because she is, and also because she is a lady, I treat her with consideration. I can't believe you think, really think, she is anything more to me."

"It is too obvious to doubt! and I am not sure that Miss Jessop doesn't share your favors with her." My mouth was dry, and I choked a little with the fierceness of my emotions. But I spoke harshly, convinced I was right.

My anger seemed to silence Landry. He made no reply, and his silence lashed me until I said:

"Why do you treat me so? A nurse, a casual patient means more to you than I do! I knew it would be so and yet——"

"You married me," Landry interrupted, finishing the sentence for me.

"And you think because I did marry you, because I

love you, that you are at liberty to affront me under my own roof by bringing that Hopkins creature here! That poor thing in the park the other day told the truth when she said she was no worse than you were. She drank, but you! what you do is a thousand times worse!"

"You are mad, Sybil! pull yourself together. It is beneath you to talk such rubbish."

"If it is rubbish discharge that Hopkins woman and, if you must have a woman in your office, get a middle-aged, decent woman, not one who is in love with you."

"Sybil, I am pretty near the limit of my endurance; my patience is nearly exhausted. I can't stand your insinuations, your accusations, much longer. You are killing every bit of happiness we might have together. Some day you will rue it." Then more quietly he said: "I don't know what I've ever done to make you think you can talk to me like this, that you can even think such things. Why, it is horrible! I hate to think that the mother of my boy is capable of such rotten thoughts, let alone that she will express them."

"Will you send that woman away?"

"If you refer to Miss Hopkins, no!"

"You'll be sorry."

"I can't be more so than I now am."

"You mean you are sorry you married me?" I demanded, beside myself.

"I never thought of it, Sybil, but unless you do differently, stop your spying, your false accusations, belittling to both of us, I shall be sorry."

As usual when I became excited, I could not control myself, my speech. I knew by the swollen veins in Landry's forehead that it was only by the greatest effort that he was able to listen calmly to my harangue. I

had not tried to disguise my feelings. Miss Hopkins' appearance, the knowledge of what the discharged nurse had told me, the appreciation that Landry, whom I had called mercenary, should care for Nina Hopkins, had crazed me to a degree. I am not pleading this as an excuse. There was none. It is simply a fact.

"Be as sorry as you like, you can't be as sorry as I am! Felice and I were right when we used to say that we would stay single rather than marry a doctor or a minister. But Felice didn't live long enough to be very unhappy, while I——"

"If you have finished, I'll leave you," Landry said with that dangerous calmness which always rather frightened me. "I'll be in the office when luncheon is ready," and he turned and went downstairs.

I did not realize that such scenes ultimately destroy faith—and love. The hopeless part of it was that I had no desire to do different. I wanted my own way, and wanted it so desperately that I would stop at nothing to secure it.

"After all," I murmured as he closed the office door, "he knows I am right."

A woman outside of an experience, with a nature like mine, can have no perspective as to the woman who is actually having the experience.

Landry came up to luncheon much as usual, yet perhaps he was a trifle more quiet. After we had finished, and he was smoking his cigar he said:

"Sybil, I can't think what has come over you. Did I not know you were in perfect health I should be very uneasy. But you are one of the few perfectly healthy women I have ever known. You have enough material comforts to satisfy you. Randolph is a beautiful child,

good-natured and well. What in the world causes you to take the attitude you do is past my comprehension."

I resented what he said to me just as I had resented everything he had done for his patients ever since we had been married. Nevertheless I watched him covertly, wondering what else he would say, and also wondering how deeply he had taken umbrage at my suspicions.

I rang the bell, and Bridget brought Randolph to me. I held him in my arms while I replied to Landry. I felt stronger when he was with me.

"You know well enough what is the matter with me. When I married you I supposed I was to be the first consideration in your life, and I have found out that I am absolutely a nonentity compared with some old woman, or poverty-stricken girl who pretends to be sick, or worse than a nonentity where your blonde nurses are concerned."

Landry seemed to have difficulty in replying.

"You are not thinking of what that poor Smathers said, are you?" he finally asked.

"Perhaps now that you mention it, I am."

"Oh, Sybil! haven't you sense enough to see that because I was instrumental in having her discharged that she said that thinking to get even? My God, Sybil! your lack of faith in me hurts!"

"How can one have faith when all the time she sees what I see?"

Landry rose from the table.

"It's the limit!" he said under his breath, yet not so low but that I heard him, and as he moved toward the door, then through it, his face was twisted with emotion, his lips moved, but, although I waited, no sound came.

I heard the office door open and close, then open

again, and the click of the front door and I knew that he had gone over to the hospital. Gone, angry at me. But what could I do? I had only told him the truth.

Landry did not come home to dinner. He telephoned he would be detained at the hospital; rather, a nurse telephoned for him. The thought that Miss Smathers might try to communicate with me came. I called Bridget and told her I was not at home to anyone. I was too miserable to talk.

I excused myself for seeing her at all by saying that unless I could prove that Landry was true to me I could not live.

At eight o'clock the telephone rang.

"Hello!" I called.

"Hello!" came back a voice which in spite of a certain thickness I recognized as that of Miss Smathers. "Is this Mrs. Jones?"

A feeling of revulsion seized me.

"No! Mrs. Jones is out," I said, disguising my voice.

"When will she be in?" came back.

"Not until late," I replied.

"Tell her to meet me in the park in the morning, same place I saw her before. Tell her it is Miss Smathers. And—don't tell anybody else," she finished in a dictatorial tone, then without waiting for an answer she hung up.

Should I meet her?

I asked myself the question many times before I went to bed, but could not decide. Yet when Landry came in an hour later, awakening me, and I found he had remained out to be with Nina Hopkins, I at once decided to keep the appointment.

I wanted to know, too, how Miss Smathers knew that Landry had given Miss Jessop a watch. So I made no

remark when Landry said that Nina Hopkins would ultimately walk as well as any child, but pretended to be too sleepy to talk.

The next morning I went into the park and, finding the bench on which Margaret and I had sat, I waited. It was a dark gray morning, and the bare, leafless trees seemed to wave their naked branches at me in mockery. I had almost forgotten my errand when suddenly I visualized Louisa Lawrence as I last saw her; when she warned me that my unhappiness lay in New York. Had Landry loved her, and had she lived, would he—here I stopped. Not even to myself could I put into words what might have happened had she lived. I never should know. Never would I be absolutely sure that had Louisa lived she wouldn't have taken Landry from me. It was a maddening thought, and I shivered closer in my seat.

"I see you are on time," the sneering voice effectually roused me.

"Yes." The monosyllable was all I could manage.

"Well, I have been around to the hospital—oh, no one knew it! I have friends there as well as your husband. Good friends, too. He's got that Hopkins young one there."

"I know."

"Come over in that arbor. I don't like to talk here. Friend husband might come along," she finished insolently.

I rose and followed her. It was the easiest thing to do. I sat down and she sat beside me. I wanted to pull my skirts away; but feared her too much.

"So you know he has that chit there having the best in the place! What you don't know is that he's paying all the bills. One of the orderlies is a friend of mine

and he heard Doctor Jones tell one of the nurses that nothing was to be spared that would help the child. Spending his money like water because she's Ruth Hopkins' sister."

"Is that all?"

"Isn't that enough? It would be for most women. But I thought you must be a bread and butter sort of a woman to put up with that man's goings on. He has all the nurseshipped; they are ready to do anything he tells them. That's the reason he fired me! I wasn't so easy. I stood up for my rights. Now I'll tell you what I came to tell you. I heard, or my gentleman friend did, which amounts to the same thing, that husband of yours make a date to take Miss Hopkins to the theater tonight." She heard me gasp and smiled evilly as she continued, "If you don't believe me, just follow him and see."

"You must be mistaken," I said weakly as she waited.

"Not on your life. Now how much is that worth?"

The woman had not been drinking, yet I think she disgusted me more than when she had. That she could in cold blood ask for money for her information was worse than to ask for it when she was not herself. So I thought. What I didn't think, however, was that I must seem a thousand times more despicable in her eyes than she did in mine; that the very fact that I allowed her to talk to me of Landry; that I met her stealthily, gave her superiority over me, I never imagined.

"What do you mean?" I asked, fumbling with the catch of my purse. I had brought all the money I had in the house with me, anticipating some such demand; yet, even so, I hesitated to allow her to know I understood.

"You know well enough what I mean," in an ugly

tone; then, changing her tactics, she wheedled: "It was through your husband I lost my place, you know."

I knew Miss Smathers spoke the truth, and that had it not been for Landry she would still be nursing. But did she also tell the truth about other things?

I opened my pocketbook and gave her the five-dollar bill I had brought with me. She looked at it disdainfully, but, before I said anything, she remarked:

"You're not very flush, are you? Too bad your husband has so many people to take care of. It must cost him a pretty penny for that Hopkins young one."

"That's all I have. I'm sorry you think it not enough. Of course, you understand that I only give it to you because you lost your position through the doctor," I told her in an attempt to save my pride.

"I understand all right!" she returned. "But don't forget to watch! Maybe you'll have more next time when you see that all I tell you comes true," and, without another word or even glancing back, she walked away.

CHAPTER XXXIV

I SAT there in the cold thinking of what this woman had told me. Of what I should do. Suddenly my musings were interrupted. A swirl of snowflakes dashed against my face. Sheltered as I had been by the arbor, I had not noticed the rising wind, nor the snow. The trees now moaned and crackled more loudly. As I rose the wind nearly threw me off my feet. I steadied myself and hurried toward home, head down, clothes blowing about me so that they hindered my progress. Yet with all my discomfort my mind was busy.

If I had been more indifferent, had cared less for Landry, would he have been jealous, and so been willing to be less intensely interested in his fateful profession, and more in me?

The blizzard was still raging when we finished dinner, in fact it had grown worse. The wind whistled and tore along the street carrying great masses of snow, almost blinding the pedestrians unfortunate enough to be compelled to be out.

Landry put on his coat and hat as soon as he had finished his cigar.

"You're not going out this terrible night?" I asked.

"Yes—but only for a little while."

"But, Landry, hear that wind!"

"I guess it won't hurt me. I'll be back soon," and he started downstairs. I listened, and he went into his office. Then I realized he was telephoning. But I had no time to linger; I had to hurry if I intended to follow him—and I did, in spite of the storm, of everything.

I dressed myself warmly, too warmly because my heavy coat was to impede my progress, then I quietly let myself out the basement door and stood under the steps in the area waiting for Landry to come out.

I had not long to wait. Almost immediately I heard the front door open, a ray of light like a long finger pointed across the street while he passed through, then I heard the door close, and an exclamation as he realized the full fury of the storm. Then he hurried past, his coat collar turned up, his head bent against the wind.

Quickly I followed. There was no danger I would be detected, no one would dream of being followed on such a night. It was all I could do to keep going. At times the wind nearly threw me off my feet. The snow was very drifted in spots, and I struggled until I was out of breath as I fought my way through them.

I was surprised when only a couple of squares from the house Landry turned down a side street, and, walking about the center of the block he went up the steps. Was Miss Smathers mistaken, and was I out on a fool's errand? This might be a simple professional call. I was wet, cold, and almost exhausted, even though I had walked such a little way. Never had I been out in such a storm.

I stood by the side of the steps, just inside the area, where I was a little sheltered from the fierce blasts of wind which came and went with maddening regularity. How long I waited I don't know, probably not half an hour. Down the street a taxicab struggled through the drifts, groaning and creaking as the engine forced the machine unwillingly along.

It drew up in front of the house, and the honk-honk of the horn caused the door to open, and I heard Landry's voice call:

"In a minute!" then the door closed again, only to reopen in the time he had mentioned. He came down the steps talking to someone. As they reached the walk, and he opened the door of the taxi I saw that it was Miss Hopkins. Smathers had been right.

For a moment I forgot the cold, my fatigue, as I struggled after the cab in what I soon saw to be a hopeless chase. For, while the cab went very slowly, I was even slower. Then down the street I spied another cab. I tried to call, but the wind drowned my voice. Then something happened to the cab in which Landry and Miss Hopkins were. It suddenly stopped, and I saw Landry get out after a few minutes, evidently attempting to help the driver.

By this time I was completely exhausted. My breath whistled through my teeth as they chattered together. I kept blindly on. Their accident—which I imagined had stalled their engine, might give me time to catch up.

I was nearly as far as I dared go. I attempted to reach a place where I could watch—then all was blank.

When I next opened my eyes I was in a strange room. Landry was beside me, and sitting a little farther off was Miss Hopkins.

Landry gave me something out of a glass, and without a word resumed his seat. His face was stern and set. Never had I seen it wear the expression it now did.

I commenced to feel a warmth very comforting seep through me, but I lay still and watched him with half-closed eyes. Where was I? Miss Hopkins moved as she came between me and the light, and it came to me that they had taken me into her room. But I dismissed all thought of her and where I was to look at Landry—unperceived by him. The couch was in a corner of the

room, in a shadow, and I was sure he thought me sleeping.

After a little my fears made me so nervous I could keep still no longer.

"Where am I?" I murmured.

"Never mind, you are all right now, and we'll soon go home," Landry answered, as he placed a finger on my wrist.

He waited about fifteen minutes, then he said:

"Come now, Sybil," and as Miss Hopkins brought my wraps which she took from a chair near the radiator he helped me to my feet. I was still weak, but the physical weakness was as nothing to the fear that gripped me when I looked at Landry's face.

The telephone rang. Miss Hopkins answered.

"The cab is here," she said.

"Come," Landry took me on one side, while Miss Hopkins steadied me on the other. So they helped me down a long flight of stairs to the door. There Landry insisted that Miss Hopkins go back, and half-carried, half-helped me down the steps.

Even as I tried to assist myself a little I thought of how gently he had spoken to Miss Hopkins when he told her not to expose herself to the storm. Would he be as gentle with me, I wondered.

That two blocks between Miss Hopkins' boarding house and our home seemed interminable. Landry did not speak after giving the cabby the address. I shrank back in the corner, shivering, although the storm had moderated a little. I was fearfully cold again. I wanted to snuggle close to Landry, but I didn't dare move nor speak. That set, stern, uncompromising look on his face would have deterred a braver soul than mine.

Strange to say, I felt no shame, no regret, for what I had done. I did not consider what I should say, what excuse I should make. It may have been in part the medicine Landry had given me, or the weakness my struggle in the blizzard had brought on. But no plan for evading questions came to me; in fact, I gave the thing no thought at all.

Landry helped me into the house, and left me in the hall while he paid the cabby. Then he helped me upstairs, and called Bridget to undress me.

"I'll give you a sleeping powder, and I'll sleep in the guest room so that you will not be disturbed. Don't wake her in the morning," he then said to Bridget, and left us.

Bridget undressed me and helped me into bed. I remember I wondered dreamily why Landry had not kissed me good-night. I was to know in the morning.

It was very late when I awoke the next morning, after eleven o'clock. I lay quite still for a time trying to pull myself together, to realize what had happened. I felt weak, and a desire to remain in bed, unusual to me.

I rang and Bridget appeared. I was astonished when she told me the time.

"Don't get up, ma'am. Doctor Jones told me to keep you in bed if I could."

If she could! Why I had no slightest desire to be anywhere else.

She had scarcely left me before I was asleep again, and I did not waken until Landry came in to luncheon. In fact, it was his coming into the room that awakened me.

"How do you feel?" he asked in his most professional manner.

"All right, but still a little drowsy."

"You better remain in bed today. I'll send Bridget in with your lunch."

I ate everything Bridget brought me, and felt much better. Just as my brain was beginning to work, my thoughts to coalesce, Landry came in and closed the door.

"Do you feel able to talk?" he asked, as he sat down near the bed.

"Yes—of course! My luncheon has made me quite all right," I returned, just a bit uneasy as to what was coming.

"Then will you tell me what you were doing last night out in that storm?"

At his question all my wits went wool-gathering. I stared at him a moment, then stammered:

"I—I—wanted—to—see—where you were going."

"Why should you be so curious last night? It was storming when you left home to follow me—I judge that was your intention."

"Why—I—oh, I didn't want you to take Miss Hopkins to the theater," I blurted out.

"Take——" he repeated, then stopped. "See here, Sybil, I mean to get to the bottom of this, so you may as well be truthful. Why did you follow me?"

"Because that nurse you discharged told me you were going to take Miss Hopkins to the theater."

"And because you believed the lies of a vindictive woman you exposed yourself to the storm, and me to embarrassment. I——"

"Oh, I didn't think!" Still I hardly knew how I was incriminating myself.

"No, you didn't think! I believe you. Had you thought you wouldn't have risked what you did." He waited a minute, then resumed, "I am going to tell you

just what I intended last night; not because you, in any way, deserve it, but because I—well, because I wish to. Nina Hopkins read the criticisms of 'The Pipes of Pan,' and talked so much of it that I told Miss Hopkins to go and see it, then describe it to the child, who is in constant pain. I ordered a ticket for her from the hospital. Then when I saw the storm, I thought I would dissuade her from going last night; but she insisted, because of her love for her sister. So I ordered a cab, and after leaving her was coming straight home. You know the rest. Now tell me why you did what you did?"

Womanlike, I commenced to blame it on the "other woman."

"You have allowed yourself to be hypnotized by that nurse!" I commenced, but he stopped me with a gesture. I commenced again. "You see, that woman——"

"Miss Smathers?" he asked, a frown on his face.

"Yes—Miss Smathers. She told me you were going to take her, and I—followed you to see if it was true."

"And if it had been? It would not be a criminal offense if I had tried to give the girl who is so faithful to all her duties, who is so self-sacrificing and kind; and who is never noticed by you, a little pleasure. But as it happens, I had no idea of going, nor that she would go when I left the house. But she would do anything to give Nina a moment's happiness."

"But you pay for things for her—and that sister," I said.

"I suppose Miss Smathers told you that, too! By the way, what do you give her for all this information?" he asked, and I could see that he was losing control of himself.

"I've only given her fifteen dollars."

"Only fifteen dollars of my money to blackmail me."

"She told me the truth. You did go out and you did try to take Miss Hopkins to the theater."

"Yes, I did—I'll see that a certain orderly is discharged tomorrow. He should have gone when she did, but I consented to give him another chance. Now, Sybil, as soon as you are able to attend to it, I want you to pack your trunks and go home for a long visit. And unless you make up your mind to stop spying upon me, to stop dealing with blackmailers, you needn't come back," and before I could voice an objection he had left the room.

CHAPTER XXXV

OVER and over again through the night I declared that I wouldn't go home, I wouldn't be sent away like a naughty child who had done something for which she should be punished. Yet all the time I knew I should go; that when Landry took that tone, with that look in his face I knew I should obey.

At breakfast the next morning he said:

"I will send a cab for you in time to catch that two o'clock train. I will also wire your mother that you are coming. I hope by the time your visit is over you will have come to your senses." He then played with Randolph a few moments before he went out.

I probably should have made a fuss, I should at least have tried to dissuade him, had I not felt so weak and almost ill from the exposure of the night before. But I was so languid, so disinclined to exert myself that I let him go without a word.

But after he had gone I wondered what I should tell mother and Margaret. They would be curious at my unexpected visit, I knew. I finally decided to tell them I had been out in the storm, that I felt badly, and thought a little visit might set me up again.

I couldn't help but wonder what Landry would do about Miss Smathers. Of one thing I was sure. He would take means to keep her from ever communicating with me again. By my foolish action in following him I had shut myself off from that source of information.

At two o'clock the cab came for me, rather for Randolph and me, and at five I was in Horning. Landry

had not bothered to come to the train to bid us good-bye. Bridget said he had bade Randolph good-bye in the morning before he left the house.

Father was at the station to meet us. He had received Landry's message, and took my explanation of my visit as reason enough for my coming so unexpectedly. But later, when mother and I were alone, I could see that she did not accept it quite as easily.

"I am very glad to have you, Sybil," she said, "but you haven't had any disagreement with Landry, have you?"

"No, indeed! Why should I?" and I laughed her fears away—for the present—by my careless answer.

Margaret, too, was inclined to be a little curious.

"I didn't expect to see you so soon again," she said to me, "although I am delighted. You are sure you feel all right now?" she asked. I had given her the same reason I had father and mother for leaving.

"By the way," she said at another time, "did you see that awful woman, that nurse Landry discharged, again?"

"No, I didn't see her after you left," I returned untruthfully. I felt sure that Margaret mistrusted that Miss Smathers was in some way mixed up in my affairs; and I determined to throw her off the scent.

Homer Carleton called as soon as he heard I was in town. The very next morning, I believe. He was so pleased to see me, so surprised, that I felt flattered. I thanked him for his beautiful Christmas gift and he replied:

"Please don't thank me! I wish I could give you everything you want or—have. Do you know you are getting more beautiful every day?" he said, his eyes upon me.

"Pshaw, Homer, that's the clothes!" I laughed. "Remember, I live in New York now. Horning dress-makers can't compete with New York's modistes, you know."

"Of course I know that fine feathers make fine birds, Sybil. But you are one of the few women who do not need fine feathers to make you lovely and tempting," he added, but not so low that I didn't hear.

An exhilarating sense of my power over this man thrilled me. I knew that he loved me; that to him, at least, I was without faults. I glanced up at him. His cheeks were flushed, his eyes were somber. He caught both my wrists in one of his strong hands, and held me facing him.

"Why are you here?" he demanded. "What has happened that you are not in New York with Landry? Is it that you at last have made up your mind to——"

"To leave him," I finished his sentence, and then I laughed again, a little unsteadily this time. "No, Homer, I have nothing so thrilling as that to tell you. I don't feel well and Landry thought a week or two here with mother would do us good."

"A week or two! I thought——" but he went no further. When mother came in where we were he soon bowed his way out—but not until he had invited me for a ride next evening.

The first night I spent at mother's I don't think I closed my eyes. Hot indignation against Landry for so summarily sending me home, and impatience with myself because I had bungled matters, and let him know I was following him, kept me awake. My over-vivid, quite uncontrolled imagination was actively at work visualizing him, my husband, at home with Miss Hopkins, and no one else in the house save a servant.

I was ready and waiting when Homer called for me that evening. It was just eight o'clock and a beautiful night.

"Do you object to taking a little spin before we have dinner?" Homer asked as he helped me into the roadster, then tucked the warm robe around me.

"No, indeed! It is a glorious night," I replied. A sudden joy in the thought, a sense of pride because of my power over the man by my side came to me.

"At last!" Homer said softly. "At last we are together again. Stolen pleasures like stolen kisses are always the sweetest, aren't they?" he asked, after a moment.

Immediately he spoke I felt that we were getting on dangerous ground, and, angry as I was at Landry, I was not ready to commit myself in any way with Homer.

"Don't you think so?" he persisted, taking my hand, which I allowed to lie loosely in his.

"Tell you later!" I said evasively.

"Be sure you do," he returned, then in response to my request, turned back toward town, and Margaret's.

Homer leaned toward me, pretended to arrange the robe, then drew me to him for a moment. I was uneasily conscious, and resented his action as I had resented what he had said and done in New York. But instead of really rebuking him as I had then, I watched him covertly so that he would not feel too much encouragement, and carefully steered the conversation away from intimate subjects.

"No one cares as I do, Sybil," he whispered as we stopped before Margaret's door. "Remember—no one!"

Some way I knew he was telling the truth. That he really loved me. All my antagonism left me. I did

not know why, but the knowledge that he loved me, that I must put him out of my life because of that love changed all my petty annoyances at anything he had done into compassion. Perhaps he felt toward Landry as I felt toward Miss Hopkins, as I had felt toward Louisa Lawrence and Mrs. Hyde.

At Margaret's we had a jolly time, but on the way back to mother's I became moody and quiet. Homer rallied me upon my sudden silence, but I simply said that I was tired. When a few minutes later we drew up at the house Landry was the one who opened the door as the honk-honk of the horn told of our return.

What did it mean? I had been gone but five days. Why should Landry be in Horning?

"Oh, what—what—is it?" I stammered.

"Don't be frightened, Sybil; it is nothing terrible. Have you had a pleasant evening? Your mother told me you had gone out with all the young folks."

"Yes—but——"

"I'll tell you when we get upstairs. — Come," and he led the way.

He had kissed me rather perfunctorily in the hall, but when we reached my room he took me in his arms and kissed me fondly. Then he commenced a long, detailed explanation of the reason for his appearing on the scene. He had been anxious about mother for some time. When she was last in New York he had questioned her and he feared she was not as well as she pretended. "Heart trouble," he said in answer to my question; "not dangerous necessarily, but she must take better care of herself."

I could see from his face that her condition was grave; although he tried to reassure me. I did my best to understand the details he minutely explained to me.

But I was now not only physically tired, but mentally depressed. The reaction following my ride home with Homer, during which he behaved in such a way that I forbade him calling upon me again. I really understood nothing at all save that mother must have great care; and no worries or responsibilities. The next thing I knew I and my boy were back in New York.

Really I was glad to get back in the way I had. But I couldn't understand Landry. Would I ever? He had sent me away in a rage; had been so cold and hard; then had come for me and taken me back with scarcely a reference to the reason of my banishment. I wondered if he surmised anything between Homer and me—or if mother had sent him a message.

Landry was evidently as glad as I was, and Bridget just bubbled over.

"Shure it was that lonesome without you and the baby!" she declared as she helped me unpack my bag, "and Miss Hopkins away, too."

"What do you mean? Has Miss Hopkins gone away?" I asked. I should have been delighted had she left without any trouble. As I intended she should go, trouble or no trouble.

"Oh, just to the hospital. They had that operation on her lame sister. They had to cut her something awful, and Doctor Jones told her to go and stay with her. She was a feelin' terrible, Miss Hopkins was. Why, this house was just like a morgue, it was."

"Did you hear her say when she was coming back?"

"No, ma'am, but I did hear that when her sister was cured she was going to bring her here."

"What!" I almost screamed.

"The lame girl, I mean, ma'am. She is coming here when she is cured."

“Who told you so?” It was preposterous, yet the girl was telling the truth, or rather what she believed.

“I heard her and Dotcor Jones talkin’ about it.”

It couldn’t be true! Landry wouldn’t ask the sister of that woman without my consent. It was unbelievable. He had gone directly to the hospital, or I should have demanded an explanation.

“Now see here, Bridget, tell me just what you heard. I won’t——” I was going to declare I wouldn’t have the child in my house, but hesitated. Landry did such queer things occasionally. I would wait and see.

“Why, Miss Hopkins was a sayin’ she didn’t know just what to do about gettin’ her sister—the lame one, you know, ma’am—back home. It seems, ma’am, that what they done to her is goin’ to make her walk all right, only she’s got to be a long time a-doin’ it. And Doctor Jones told her that he wanted to keep her, the lame one, under somethin’—I didn’t understand, and that he would have her here for a day or two before Miss Hopkins took her home.”

“Was observation the word?”

“That sounds somethin’ like it, but you see I was a-dustin’ and didn’t rightly hear.”

“Very well, Bridget. Thank you; now if you will get some supper ready I think the doctor will be in in a few minutes.”

“I have cold chicken, ma’am.”

“That will be nice, but fix it in the chafing dish with some peppers. It is a cold night, and a warm supper will taste good.”

It was late when we finished and I said I was going immediately to bed.

“Me, too!” Landry returned: “Oh, by the way,

Sybil, you recall Nina Hopkins, that little lame sister of my nurse?"

"Of course! What about her?"

"Why, the operation was an unqualified success. The child will walk as well as anyone. She must have great care, of course, for a while. The hospital is crowded, and she will soon be able to be moved. I have told Miss Hopkins that I should like to have her where I can watch her for a day or two before she leaves the city. I knew you wouldn't object."

"I think I should have been consulted before you made any arrangements."

"Had you been at home I surely would have done so, but I spoke to Miss Hopkins about it. I don't think it will put you out very much."

"When do you think of having her here?"

"She will leave the hospital in about a week."

I said no more. Landry was plainly puzzled at my show of dignity, and as evidently relieved. I had also found out what I wanted to. I had a week in which to balk his plan.

CHAPTER XXXVI

NEXT morning was dark and disagreeable. Landry left early, and I busied myself in putting away the things that I had taken for baby and me on our visit home. About half-past ten, just before Landry's office hours—I heard the honk-honk of an automobile.

As usual I rushed to the window. What was my astonishment to see Landry and Miss Hopkins get out of the loveliest little car. A dark blue body. It was a long, sporty-looking roadster. Just the kind of a car I liked. But what in the world were they doing in it?

I rushed back into the bedroom where I had been working, as I heard Landry come upstairs.

"Sybil, Sybil, come here!" he called.

"What is it?" I answered as I ran out, simply devoured with curiosity.

"You're so fond of looking out the window, come now and see who's here!" he said laughingly, leading the way.

"I don't see anyone!"

"Don't you see anything?"

"Of course I do! I see that roadster. Whose is it?"

"Yours and mine."

"What do you mean, Landry, yours and mine—stop your joking, and tell me about it. I saw you and Miss Hopkins drive up in it about half an hour ago——"

"Yes, she helped me select it. Isn't it a beauty?"

"She—helped you—select—it," I repeated. I began to understand a little.

"Yes, I asked her to go with me and help me select

the color she thought you would like. It's a beauty, isn't it?" he asked again.

"When did you buy it?" I asked, indignation making my voice cold and hard.

"The day after you went away."

"I see. You sent me away because of Miss Hopkins, then as soon as I was out of sight you got her to help you select a machine. Why didn't you wait until I got back, and let me choose it with you? Or did you think Miss Hopkins had better taste?"

"Don't be sarcastic, Sybil. Tell me, do you like the car?"

"How many times have you ridden in it?" I asked, instead of answering his question.

"Three, I guess, three or four. You see I came over to Horning after you; so hadn't much chance to run it. It acts like a bird. I haven't had a bit of trouble. You'll have lots of fun with it."

"How many times have you had Miss Hopkins in it?"

"My, what a question box you are! I have taken her home twice, and called for her this morning. That makes three times."

"Then you have had her with you every time you have used the car?"

"No, I recall now that I have been out four times. I took one of the nurses home the other night. She had fainted, and as I was going her way I offered to take her."

"Um——"

"Now tell me how you like it?" Landry asked again. But some of the boyishness had gone from his voice; some of the enthusiasm had oozed from him.

"I don't like it at all!"

"What!—Oh, I am disappointed. It is really your Christmas present. You know I didn't give you much. I was waiting to see if I could afford a car for you. You drive so well I think you could get along all right even here in town. Homer was a good teacher."

Homer would not have insulted me by asking some other woman to select a gift for me, I felt like saying, but restrained. The introduction of Homer's name had hardened me further.

"Yes, he is a very good teacher," I replied, as I turned carelessly away from the window.

"And you really mean that you don't like the car?" Landry asked.

"I really mean it."

"Perhaps I could change it—but I hate to, it's just exactly what I thought you'd want; and it runs so perfectly."

"Don't change it. That would be foolish when you have gone to so much trouble to buy it," I said, then closed the conversation by calling Bridget and giving her some orders.

How dared he give me anything that Hopkins girl had selected? I'd show them, both of them!

The next afternoon there was a decided change in the weather. The sun shone brightly and it was really unseasonably warm. When his office hours were over Landry called up the stairs:

"Get your duds on, Sybil! I'll get the car and we'll take a little spin, then you can leave me at the hospital."

He had not waited for any reply, but had rushed out of the house.

"The doctor says for you to get ready, ma'am."

Bridget's smiling face appeared in the door. "Ain't that a grand new auto, ma'am?"

I neither moved nor answered.

In about ten minutes Landry was back. I heard him honk again and again; still I paid not the slightest attention.

Miss Hopkins was yet in the office, and she called me on the phone. Bridget answered, and, turning to me, said:

"Miss Hopkins says the doctor's waiting, ma'am."

Still I made no move.

A moment later the front door opened and closed. Landry came up the stairs calling, this time impatiently:

"Where in the world are you, Sybil? I have been tooting that horn until all the neighbors are in the windows."

He was in a state of irritation unusual with him. When he saw me sitting quietly sewing, he burst out:

"For heaven's sake, Sybil! What are you sitting there sewing for when I'm waiting for you?"

"Because I am not going."

"Not going, why?"

"Need you ask? Is there any wife whom you know who would allow her husband's——" I stopped, rather the look on Landry's face stopped me—then I finished, leaving out the obnoxious word, "to select her gifts for her?"

"Sybil, what are you talking about?"

"I went away—at your command—because of your interest in Miss Hopkins, and because I was determined to find out how far that interest went. I am scarcely out of town before you have that same woman select a car—ostensibly for me—and you and she proceed to

christen it. Can you think I am such a fool, so blind that I don't know what it means? If you do, you are mistaken!"

"Sybil, see here. I can't understand you, your attitude toward me. I bought the car principally to give you pleasure. I asked Miss Hopkins to select the color, simply because, being a woman and having excellent taste, I thought she would be more apt to please you than I would as to color. Now, be a sensible girl and come and have a nice spin, and forget such nonsense."

Landry's words were conciliatory; but his manner was not. He looked decidedly angry, but I had made up my mind, and it would take more than angry looks to move me.

"I am doing the only sensible thing in the matter right now," I replied. "If you want company, take the woman who bought the car; the woman who has been riding in it before I even saw it."

"Very well, I will!"

I did not really believe Landry would do so, but he went directly into the office and in a moment he came out, followed by Miss Hopkins. He helped her into the car, jumped in himself, and they were off.

I was absolutely nonplussed, and then I became hysterical. I walked the floor; I wrung my hands; I sobbed and cried, until Bridget, hearing, came and begged me to tell her what ailed me. The more she said the more hysterical I became. Finally, utterly worn out, still so angry I could scarcely think, I allowed her to persuade me to lie down.

Landry did not return until dinner time. He said nothing about the affair of the afternoon; neither did I. My hands trembled so I scarcely could hold my fork. Such a giving way of nerves had left me all weak and

trembling. When we finished dinner Landry said sternly:

"Now, Sybil, let's have it out. I should feel like sending you back to your mother if it were not for her health. Why do you persist in insulting me and in making yourself unhappy?"

"Why do you persist in keeping Miss Hopkins in spite of my wish that she leave?"

"We shall never get anywhere this way!" he said, and, rising, he commenced to walk the floor.

"No, it is only you and Miss Hopkins who will succeed in getting anywhere. You have the car, you know."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that never so long as I live will I put a foot in that car. That's what I mean. You and Miss Hopkins bought it together. You can ride in it."

In my excitement over the car I had forgotten all about Nina Hopkins, the sister, coming from the hospital to stay for a day or two. But I now found that Ruth was to take her home. I would be resigned to her coming if in some way I could prevent that nurse returning; if I could keep her away from Landry.

Morning came and yet I had thought of no plan; at least of none that was feasible. I was tired, cross, and almost quarreled with Landry because he complained that his coffee was cold.

"If you'd drink it when it was first poured instead of reading, it would be hot enough!" I grumbled when he asked Bridget to bring him a fresh cup.

"Sure it ain't no trouble at all, doctor!" she assured him as she hurried to wait on him.

"I think, Landry," I commenced, "that it would be much better to board that lame girl next door. You know that woman takes boarders," the thought had just

occurred to me. "Bridget wants to visit her sister for a week, and I shall be alone. You surely won't expect me to wait upon a sister of——" once more the look of his face held back the word I would have spoken—"her."

"I should not dream of asking you to do anything unreasonable. But Miss Hopkins would take entire charge of her. In fact, save for the matter of food, you will not know she is here. I have ordered an extra cot put in the office. They will both sleep there, so you will scarcely know she is with us."

As usual, I had failed. When Landry made up his mind to anything connected in any way with his profession I had no particle of influence over him. That he would have acted the same had it been any child who needed his attention I well knew, but just as surely I did not, would not, admit it. I pretended to think it was all because of Ruth Hopkins, until I persuaded myself that I was right; and that because of his love for the older sister Landry was doing all he could for the younger.

I heard them bring in the cot. And listened while Landry and Miss Hopkins planned for the invalid's comfort. Then I went into the kitchen and told Bridget she might have a vacation. To my surprise she replied:

"The doctor asked me, ma'am, if I would go home some other time. And sure I tould him I wasn't goin' home at all, at all!"

"You did! Well you may go tomorrow and remain a week."

"But the doctor said, ma'am——"

"I am mistress of the house, Bridget," I replied calmly, although I was fairly boiling inside. "You will go tomorrow."

"What's this?" Landry asked. "I thought you said

you would remain until the little girl could go, Bridget." I had not heard him come into the room, and now I flushed with annoyance. He had no right to interfere with my household arrangements.

"So I will, sir, if Mrs. Jones will let me."

"Let her. What does she mean? You haven't discharged her?" Landry asked, oblivious that she was listening.

"No, but I shall if you interfere with my running of the house!" I replied angrily.

"I do not intend to interfere, Sybil, as you know. But I asked Bridget to postpone her visit because I feared the extra work, though it will be slight, might be too much for you."

"Yes, let me stay, ma'am! You have been sick, you know, and might get sick again," Bridget begged.

"Very well!" I snapped and walked, no stalked, out of the kitchen. I was angry, disgusted. Nothing I tried to do turned out as I wanted it to. Bridget I knew mistrusted that I had some ulterior motive in trying to get rid of her, and was accordingly suspicious. She was too good a servant to offend. I couldn't afford to lose her.

So, after Landry had gone out, I called her to me and said:

"I thought you looked tired, Bridget, and as we had had so much company over the holidays and you had done your work so well I would give you a little vacation. Of course, I should pay you just the same."

"Thank you, ma'am. But I wouldn't leave you when you need me. That little lame girl from the hospital will need waitin' on, ma'am."

"Her sister will do all the waiting there is done!" I snapped, getting to the end of my patience.

"But she has to help the doctor. I'll stay, ma'am," she replied, with maddening insistence.

The next afternoon I heard the horn of the automobile and running to the window I saw Landry tenderly lift a slight figure with flowing golden curls and carry her up the steps. I had also heard Miss Hopkins run to the door; and now I rushed back to the head of the stairs to listen.

"Ruthie! Oh, Ruthie!" I heard a child's treble exclaim, "I am so glad to come to you."

"And Ruth is so glad to have you, little sister," she replied, closing me out. Some way I had the queerest feeling. I resented being shut out of the office; but more still did I resent the knowledge that I had no share in their rejoicing, although I did not admit it even to myself. But I ran into the living-room, and snatching Randolph from the floor where he was playing with his toys I hugged him so fiercely to me that he cried.

"I have you!" I said over and over. "You are mine anyway! Let them have that lame girl with the curls if they want to; I have you!" and a lot more hysterical nonsense that frightened Randolph. Explain the feeling if you can, I couldn't.

I saw nothing of the child that day. But the next day Miss Hopkins had gone out, and a call came for Landry. He went into the kitchen and asked Bridget if she would listen for the bell.

"I have left it where Nina can reach it," he told her, "and if she rings please see what she wants. Her sister will be back in half an hour."

I waited until I heard Landry drive away, then I crept quietly down the stairs and into the office.

"Is that you, Ruth?" a sweet voice asked me as I opened the door. "You got back quick."

"No, it isn't Ruth," I said, moving further into the room where the child could see me—and I her. "It is Mrs. Jones."

"I am glad to meet you, Mrs. Jones," the child said with a quaint old-fashioned courtesy, extending a thin, small hand.

I took the little hand, and held it a moment as I stood looking down at the frail creature. She was a really beautiful child. Her great eyes were a deep violet in color with long curling lashes. Her brow was white and broad, her mouth exquisite. The small head was weighted down with a mass of curls of pure gold. The contrast with the violet eyes made her a picture of childish innocence and loveliness. I could scarcely restrain myself. I longed to take her in my arms and cuddle her as I did Randolph. But all I did was to pat the little hand and ask her how she felt.

"I am almost well," she replied gleefully. "Doctor Jones says I am going to walk and play like other children. He's your husband, isn't he?" she asked with a return of her old-fashioned manner.

"Yes."

"Aren't you glad? He is so nice. Ruth and I both think he is the most wonderful man that ever lived. Don't you think so, too?"

"Of course," I replied coldly. The mention of Ruth Hopkins had chilled all feeling for the child—for the moment.

"If it hadn't been for him perhaps I never should have walked," she went on. "I love him very dearly."

"Where did you learn to speak so correctly?" I asked her. "Have you been to school?"

"Oh, no!" and she laughed merrily. "But mother plays school with me. She always has. And my mother

is a very educated lady. She speaks very properly; and makes me. I speak French and Italian, too," she added, but without a hint of boasting in her childish tones.

"You are a very smart little girl. Would you like to see my little boy? He's only a baby compared to you, but we think he is the nicest baby in the world."

"Oh, I'd just love to see him. I love babies."

As I went upstairs to fetch Randolph, I wondered what possessed me to act so foolish over that Hopkins girl's sister. But she was so lovely, she was so little and so sweet. I hoped I wouldn't get caught with her by either Landry or Ruth Hopkins. So I hurried back with Randolph, determined to stay but a moment.

"Oh, the darling!" Nina exclaimed, holding out her hands.

Randolph almost sprang from my arms to go to her, as he cooed and giggled baby-fashion at the child.

I sat down close to the little tot, and held Randolph so she could put her arms around him without moving. Landry had forbidden her to move until his return.

About three o'clock Miss Hopkins rapped on my door. My astonishment must have shown in my face, for she said:

"I beg your pardon for disturbing you, Mrs. Jones; but the doctor is going to Larchmont and wanted to know if you would like to go with him. He is going to drive the car."

With a quick flare of anger I got to my feet.

"You tell the doctor to excuse me. He can take you!"

"I will tell him. I shall not expect to be asked to take your place," she said with dignity.

The dignity of the nurse, her reply, surprised me for a moment. I would rather she had been insulted, angry, anything, so that I might excuse myself and have a

chance to say all the bitter things in my heart. But she had left the room, and I felt she had the better of the situation.

Unexpectedly Landry ran up the stairs. He wanted a warm pair of gloves he had left in his room.

"Better come along, Sybil. It is a beautiful day, and I am sure you would enjoy the ride."

"No, thank you! I told you I never should put my foot in that car, and I meant it. When you want a companion, take the one who helped you select it, the one I honestly believe you bought it for."

I had seen Nina Hopkins only twice since the time I took Randolph down to her. Each time but for a moment, and in Landry's presence I could see that the child was puzzled and hurt by my changed attitude. Her eyes followed me, and her lip quivered.

One day I went down for a paper—ostensibly—really, to see her. She was sitting up in Landry's big office chair. She was much better, and was going home the next day. In spite of my delight to get Miss Hopkins out of the house if only for a day or two, I felt a little stab of pain that I shouldn't see Nina any more.

"Mrs. Jones," she said softly as I turned to go after finding a paper, "I am going home to-morrow. May I see your darling baby once more?"

The pleading tone went straight to my heart.

"Of course you may—that is," I caught myself, "if your sister will do an errand for me." Not even to please the child, or myself, would I remain in the room with Ruth Hopkins.

"I know she will. Sister is always willing to do anything for others. Mother says she was always like that," the little girl answered.

Landry evidently had been listening, for now he broke in heartily:

"What is it, Sybil? It will do Miss Hopkins good to get out for a little while. And as I shall be here she can very well do your errand for you."

Without looking at or speaking to her I told Landry what I wished done. Then I waited until she had left the house before I brought Randolph down. This time Nina held him herself, and her quaint baby-talk, her cooing, her conceits, were so beguiling that the time fairly flew. Landry after a time left us alone. And taking the baby from her, I talked to her of herself, her likes and dislikes, and what she was going to do when she returned home.

It was like a breath of spring to talk to her, to draw her out. Her little mind was a perfect storehouse of beautiful thoughts, which she expressed in beautiful language. Yet with it all she was just a simple, unspoiled child. For when I asked her if she would like a big doll to take home with her, she clapped her hands for joy, and proceeded to describe minutely just how she should dress it.

"Mother says I sew very nicely for a little girl," she told me, "and it will be like having a baby of my own if I make all the clothes."

"Don't you want a dressed doll?"

"No! Please give me the cloth and let me make the things myself. Mother says we always love folks we do things for; and I want to love the dollie very much. Please tell me your name, so I can name it for you."

She was delighted with my name and kept saying it over and over.

"Sybil, Sybil. It sounds just like a story, or a fairy princess or something," she said.

I remained with her until Landry came downstairs, then I left to go shopping for the doll. But while I wandered from shop to shop to find the prettiest doll there was, I kept thinking of what Nina had said.

"Mother says we always love folks we do things for."

If that were so, why should I love Landry? I scarcely ever did anything for him, save to keep his house going smoothly. But if it were so in spite of that, and the exception only proved the rule as in other things, no wonder Ruth Hopkins loved Landry. Wasn't she constantly doing little things for him?

I had noticed, too, of late that he depended more on her. She kept his books, attended to his banking, and drew his checks. She often reminded him that he needed rubbers, or of something he had forgotten.

"Love begets love," I had somewhere read. If she loved him, would he love her and so exclude me? All these thoughts chased through my brain. But as always they were mere thoughts and did not bring action in their train.

"Landry, will you give this doll to your patient? I don't care to go down," I said to him after dinner.

"Certainly, Sybil. But she would love to have you give it yourself. She told me after you left her this afternoon that she loved you. And that she was going to name the doll Sybil. Because if it were a real little girl she would want it to be just like you."

"Quite a compliment, but please do as I ask."

"Yes, a great one from an innocent child," he replied, as he left the room, the doll under his arm.

They left the next morning. While Miss Hopkins was busy I went down and said good-bye to Nina. I could scarcely keep back the tears as the child threw her little arms about my neck and told me how much she loved

me. Landry carried Randolph down to be kissed, then the car came and he took them to the station.

I felt as if a load had been lifted from me when I realized that Ruth Hopkins would be away for three or four days at least. Once more Landry and I would be alone for a little; once more I should be free of that horrible jealousy every time he went into his office. At first I had feared he would ask that Miss Jessop to come while she was gone, but when I asked him he said no, she could not leave the hospital.

"I will take my sewing and sit in the office when you are out," I told him gleefully, "and answer the telephone for you."

"All right, Sybil. But be sure you get every message."

My face flushed at the reply. I knew he referred to the time I had withheld the message from Mrs. Hyde.

By the way, he had had a long letter from Mrs. Hyde, in which she said she was almost completely well, and giving him the credit.

"Had it not been for your constant care of me, your interest in me, I should have died, dear friend and physician," she wrote. "Mr. Hyde and myself are in love with this country where the sun spills warm gold over everything; and it is happiness just to be alive. We shall remain several months if possible, although Mr. Hyde's business interests may cause us to leave sooner than we desire." There was a little more, but nothing of interest.

"What does she mean that his business interests may call him back?" I asked, quick to seize upon the salient point.

"Why, as the war goes on it begins to look as if we also might become involved."

"Why, what do you mean?" The war had been going on for nearly three years, but aside from occasionally reading of it, or hearing it discussed. I had given it little or no thought. It had not touched me, so why should I? I have since learned that I was not alone in this. I had no perspective.

"I mean that it looks as if the United States might also have to take a stand against Germany. Mr. Hyde is a manufacturer, his factories are capable of turning out vast quantities of munitions. Should we declare war they would be needed. That is what she means, I think."

"But we can't go to war; we are too far away."

"Not too far for Uncle Sam if he has to do it," Landry replied. "For a long time, Sybil, I personally have believed war unavoidable. We have been grossly insulted as a nation. The Allies need us to help win the war for the civilized peoples of the world. The Hun is no longer to be classed as civilized. He is beyond the pale."

"But that would mean that our men would have to go over there and be killed just because of the Allies."

"No, Sybil. Not just because of the Allies. Because of you and me, of our children. Of Randolph. Have you no vision, dear? Can you not see that it is for a lasting peace we must fight if fight we have to? The unspeakable Prussian has done things which only blood can wipe out; our blood perhaps as well as theirs."

"But we, the United States, have no army?" I objected.

"We have men, men who will quickly learn to be soldiers."

"Oh, it would be too awful; don't let's talk about it. They couldn't take you because you have us to look

out for." Landry made no answer, and we said no more about the war.

I often wonder how it was that I made such a muddle of my life at this time. I might have been so happy; and I was so often miserable. I wanted Landry to succeed; I should have been more than disappointed had he been a failure.

Now once more just as I was rejoicing in the few days alone with my husband, when my heart was light and gay, when for a time the world smiled at me; along came the cloven foot again in the shape of Miss Smathers.

"A lady—woman to see you, ma'am," Bridget announced.

"Very well, show her up," I said absently.

"How do you do? It's a long time since we met," I heard, and there stood the woman Landry had forbidden me ever to speak to again.

"Why——"

"You don't act over and above pleased to see me," she said, as she advanced into the room and closed the door after her.

"I am not, my husband——" again I hesitated.

"Has told you not to see me! Oh, don't bother to deny it! It's no more than is to be expected from a man who will make a woman lose her job in the winter. He's afraid of what I know. That's the reason he don't want you to see me. But I take it you're no fool. You look as if you had a mind of your own," she finished with a leer, seating herself.

I checked the words of dismissal that rose to my lips. The woman looked at me inquiringly:

"What were you going to say?" she demanded.

"I don't think I care to say."

"Well, I'll be darned! I didn't take you for the milk and water kind." She laughed disagreeably. "I thought you had more sand."

My impulse was to turn her out; but stronger still was the desire to know why she had come to me again. What had happened that she considered to be worth her telling?

"Well, do you want to know why I have come?" she sneered.

"Don't talk to me in that tone!" I said, goaded to the reply. "I am not accustomed to be spoken to in that manner."

"Oh, the fine lady act."

"I mean just what I say. If you can't be more respectful you may go."

"Very well, ma'am," she said cringingly after the manner of her kind. "I'll be more careful. But what I have got to tell you is worth ten dollars."

"So you want money again."

"No more than you want to know what I know."

I turned away from her for a moment, weakly trying to steel myself to send her away. But my curiosity, my jealousy was too strong. I turned back and said:

"Well, what is this wonderful thing you have to tell?"

"I get the ten, do I?" she returned, a fiendish look of joy on her hard face.

"Yes."

"I'll trust you, because if you try to fool me I know a way to get even."

"Yes, go on!"

"Well, all the hospital is talking about Doctor Jones getting ready to go to the war—it's coming you know," this woman said with conviction, "and Ruth Hopkins is

going with him. It is all settled. Now, is my news worth anything?"

"Your news, as you call it, is ridiculous! This country is not at war, it never will be. Here's your ten dollars. Now go, and don't bring me any more tales."

"What I have told you has been true every time. This is the truest of all. And there *will* be war. Mark me; there *will be war*." And with a prophetic shake of her head she took the bill and slunk down the stairs and out of the house.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

For a long time I sat trying to justify myself for disobeying Landry's express command that I should not see Miss Smathers again. I could have laughed aloud at her ridiculous news; but—the hospital force were still talking of Landry and Miss Hopkins. They must surely have been very bold to give reason for so much gossip.

Then suddenly it came to me what it would mean to me if there should be war, and Landry and Miss Hopkins should go away together. It would mean but one thing. Of course he would say he was a physician, she his nurse. But I knew that would be but a cloak to hide their intrigue. Once more I laughed away the thought. There would be no war, but there still was Ruth Hopkins to be reckoned with.

She would be back in a day or two. I would beg Landry to let me help him in his office. I would promise to be very careful if he would discharge her and let me do her work. So when he came in an hour later I at once approached the subject:

"Landry, why not let Miss Hopkins go—back to the hospital, or somewhere else, and let me do her work? I should love to help you."

Landry looked up, surprised.

"It wouldn't do at all, Sybil."

"But I could answer the telephone, look after your books, and——"

"Assist with the patients," he interrupted, laughing.

"No, Sybil, you attend to the house and the boy and I'll manage the office."

Landry had spoken so good-naturedly that I persisted until he said impatiently:

"I told you it wouldn't do. It won't for all the reasons I have given you, and the added one that my patients wouldn't care to patronize a doctor—my wealthy patients—who did not have a competent nurse in the office. Other physicians do, and so I must do likewise or lose a good part of my most paying practice."

"And good company."

"That will do, Sybil. If you are going to be disagreeable I will go downstairs."

What he said hurt, but as I made no reply, he smiled at me kindly. There was a sort of boyish sweetness in Landry's smile I had never seen in any other man's.

As he sat there reading I stole a glance at him. I recalled the various men I knew best. Several of them I liked very much indeed, Starr Jordan and others, but how far short they fell when compared to Landry. I was sure he loved me when we were married, but now, after only a few years, the first rapture of his love had passed.

It seemed to me that nothing was talked of save war. I got to hate the sound of the word. Instead of playing cards and having a good time when Janet and Starr came over for the evening, or we went over to see them, Landry and Starr would persist in talking of the war, and were so disinterested when they did consent to play that we finally stopped asking them.

Ruth Hopkins had returned. I heard her tell Landry that Nina had stood the journey very well, and that her mother was so happy over the knowledge that Nina would soon walk that she did nothing but sing his, Landry's, praises.

When Landry came up to dinner he gave me a letter.

"It is from Nina," he said, "she sent it by her sister."

"Dear Mrs. Jones;" she commenced, "I asked mother if I might write to you and she said I could if I would be very careful and not blot the paper. Sometimes when I hurry I do. I had a nice trip home with Ruth, although I was pretty tired when we got here. But mother was so happy over me that I was soon rested. I carried my dollie all the way in my arms, and I have commenced her clothes. I have some of the underclothes finished, and mother says they are very nicely made for a little girl. I thank you again for the dollie. I call her Sybil all the time. I love her very much, and I love you for giving her to me, and because I love you anyway even if you hadn't given her to me. I wish I could see you and your darling baby again. Maybe I will some day, because when I get strong and well I am going to be a nurse like Ruthie is, and try to help little sick girls and boys get well. I would rather do that than anything else in the wide, wide world, because I know how dreadful it is to be always sick.

"Please kiss darling baby Randolph for me. I am going to ask you for something. Will you some time send me his picture? Mother said she was afraid it was asking too much, but when I told her how I loved him and how sweet he was she gave me permission. I wish I had one of you, too!—mother doesn't know I said that.

"Please remember me to Doctor Jones. He is the nicest man I ever knew. Your little friend,

"NINA HOPKINS."

"Would you like to read her letter?" I asked Landry.

"Yes, if you don't mind," and while he read the child-

ish effusion I watched his face grow tender. All for others, I thought bitterly, not realizing that it was for the troubles, the illnesses of others that he saddened. That was in part the sadness of the physician, instead of the man.

"She is a very lovable child," he remarked, as he laid the letter down. "Imagine her planning to be a nurse so she can help other afflicted children. Poor little thing! She has suffered far more than she has allowed her mother or even her sister to know. She hated to worry them, she told me when I questioned her."

"Well, perhaps if the war lasts long enough she will go and nurse the soldiers. It would almost reconcile me to the war if she would." I said, remembering what Smathers had said.

"Perhaps!" Landry said quietly. "There are a good many that will have to go if the war lasts long enough. Many that will be needed."

"They aren't asking married men with families to go," I said, wishing to draw him out.

"Sometimes it becomes a duty which one does without the asking," he answered. His tone rather frightened me and I changed the subject. I would not be the one to put ideas into his head; or to talk of any foolish ones already there.

Gradually, very gradually, a sense of impending evil dawned. Then one day Landry came in, all excitement.

"It's come, Sybil! I knew it had to."

"It, what?"

"War! The United States has joined the Allies. At last we shall take our rightful place among the nations; at last we can hold up our heads."

"Why, Landry Jones, you talk as if you were glad we were going to have war! I don't see why we should

fight just because France and England are fighting. We're too far away anyhow."

"Oh, Sybil, you talk like so many others! We must fight. I have seen it all along. A world democracy is the only way to lasting peace for us all."

"Do stop talking about it! It gives me the shivers. I don't believe it will amount to much in this country. So why talk about it?"

Foolish, blind me. I knew nothing, that is, practically nothing, concerning conditions. I was not the type of woman who read newspapers save for the social news and the advertisements. Most of my reading was of light fiction and home magazines. I really meant what I said about the war. I really didn't see why we should be dragged into it.

Soon afterward I went into the kitchen and there was Bridget with a newspaper spread out before her.

"Oh, Mrs. Jones! Will the doctor have to go?" she asked with breathless interest.

"Go where?" I asked, pretending not to know what she meant.

"Why to the war! The paper says that everybody must do his part, and sure there is no one what can tend sick people like the doctor. See how he cured the little lame girl, and——"

"Don't be silly! There will be no war, and if there were, Doctor Jones couldn't go. They don't make men with wives and babies fight."

"I'm a-thinkin' there's many a lad will wish he had a wife and baby then. Sure it ain't no joke to stand up and be shot at. No joke at all."

"Stop talking about it, Bridget. We most likely won't hear anything more of it."

"Very well, ma'am," but I noticed that she folded

the paper carefully and laid it on the pantry shelf. Evidently she had not read all she wished of the war news.

When Landry came in that night I noticed the worn look on his face. And for a moment my heart ached with love for him. Then I saw something else, a sort of exultation, almost spiritual, that frightened me. What was he thinking to bring that look into his eyes? A look I never had seen in his or any other face before.

I was still asking myself that question when Randolph cried. I went into him, then called Landry. The baby seemed a little feverish, but after a little it passed off, and he slept quietly again.

"I wish you would take the little chap into the country somewhere, Sybil. He isn't looking as rugged as he did."

"And leave you with Ruth Hopkins again. No, thank you!" I said sharply. That look in Landry's face had got on my nerves.

After dinner Landry was sitting in a large armchair under the shaded light, his long legs extended lazily, one of his well-cared-for hands dropping over the chair arm. In the other he held his pipe. He was in one of his occasional relaxed moods.

As I watched him I felt all the old love, the love without suspicion, surge through me. The love that I felt before and just after I married him; free from jealousy and distrust.

Later Janet and Starr came in. Janet carried a bundle. After she had laid off her wraps she opened it. To my surprise it was a gray sweater.

"What in the world are you doing?" I asked, as she commenced to knit.

"There's nothing so bad for one's nerves as to hear

about so much misery and do nothing. Starr has talked so much about the war, the suffering of the boys, their needs, that I just had to do something."

"But surely you don't have to knit those coarse things. You can afford to buy them."

"I know I can, Sybil. But some way the little I have done with my own hands seems to bring me nearer the spirit of the war than all the thousands I have given to various causes."

Janet had been a most generous subscriber to all the charitable societies ever since the war began. She was very wealthy, and it had been only natural she should give. But for dainty Janet to spoil her hands by knitting those things for the soldiers was to me astounding.

"The soldiers would be just as warm, probably warmer, in those you could buy; and surely they wouldn't know the difference."

"No, that isn't the idea, Sybil. I feel that in some way I am nearer to the heart of things. Starr may go, you know. If he does, well, this helps me not to think too much; so you see a little bit of selfishness is in my knitting, too."

"Starr is too old, isn't he?"

"Yes, but remember he may be valuable in many ways, Sybil. He is only thirty-three, and in perfect health. I am sure he will go if the war doesn't soon end."

"That would be dreadful for you."

"Yes, and no! I should try to go with him."

"Why, what could you do?"

"I could drive an ambulance. I am spending an hour or two a day in a garage learning the mechanism of the car; you know I have driven all sorts of cars, both in Europe and here."

"But would Starr let you?"

"He will object at first, as will father and mother. But if I am needed; if I can be of service, none of them will stand in my way."

"I don't see how you can think of such a thing! There are men enough for such jobs without dainty women like you trying to drive ambulances."

"Any work that a woman can do is woman's work if this war continues," Janet remarked, then dropped the subject.

I looked again at Landry. He and Starr were talking interestedly while the smoke from their pipes lent a homely feeling of security. Thank God we had Randolph. And, too, that we had no money. We were absolutely dependent upon what Landry earned, all save the rent of the house where Margaret and Warren lived. Married men with dependent families were immune.

In the morning I had occasion to go to the office. Landry and Miss Hopkins were bending over something on the table and neither gave me more than a glance; while Miss Hopkins murmured a faint "good morning," to which I gave no notice.

When Landry came up to luncheon, he took me to task because I did not respond to her greeting.

"It wasn't that it amounted to much, Sybil, it was more the way you did it. Perhaps you were not aware of the sneer on your face, but it was there. It isn't right. And it belittles you."

"Of course, you would be against me! I am used to that."

"It's a damned shame the way you treat that girl!" Landry returned.

"Please don't swear at me because of her. It isn't nice toward your wife; and to return the compliment

it belittles you. I know you are in love with her, but I'm your wife, you know."

Landry flushed angrily. He got up and walked to the window.

"I don't see anything in my remark, which at least was truthful, to cause such a tirade. Miss Hopkins, as you know, is a good nurse. I like her. Why do you use her to make things unpleasant? You're not fair."

"She must be a queer sort of a woman, no matter how good a nurse she is, to stay here when she knows how I feel. If she were the right sort she couldn't be hired to stay when she knows that I hate her—and the reason."

"I don't think she does know. I have tried to keep the knowledge from her as far as I could. She realizes that you do not like her. That is all."

Landry had long ago given up any idea he had entertained that Miss Hopkins and I would ever be friendly. I knew that it worried him; that he would have liked me to receive Miss Hopkins occasionally upstairs. And I more than half suspected that he did little gracious things which he would have delegated to me had I allowed.

But I know what she and the other women who made much of Landry wanted. They would like to take him away from me, to get him for themselves. Well, they wouldn't get him! I had him; he had married me. And I was going to keep him.

Before I knew it I had given these thoughts vent; and as usual when I once let go, my temper got the best of me and I said many things which I would have better left unsaid. Especially when I quoted Smathers.

"Have you seen that woman again?" Landry demanded, interrupting me.

"It's none of your business if I have! If I saw men the way you do women you might have some reason to object. But surely I have a right to talk to my own sex, especially when you are so fond of them."

"Your taste in companions is to be commended," Landry returned with a sneer, unusual to him. "I suppose you have forgotten that I absolutely forbade you to see that woman again."

"When you refuse to see Ruth Hopkins again, I'll refuse to see Miss Smathers. Until you do, I'll see her whenever I like."

With such an oath as I had never heard from his lips, Landry turned and left me. But it changed into a sort of a groan as, upon opening the door, we saw Ruth Hopkins hatted and coated, standing very white on the threshold.

"You must believe me, Doctor Jones, that I did not intentionally listen," she said very quietly, first looking at me. "I came up to give you a message. The house phone seems to be out of order. I rapped, but you did not hear me. I heard all that Mrs. Jones said." Then she turned to me: "I am too proud to remain where I am thought of as you evidently think of me. I have known all along that you did not like me; but that you would insult your husband by thinking the things you do is past belief. I say nothing of myself. I am a poor girl earning my living. But that you should so misjudge Doctor Jones because of his kindness to me is terrible. Please believe me when I tell you that you are absolutely mistaken and——"

"Of course, you'd say that!" I broke in, beside myself with rage. "But men do not buy automobiles and such things for a woman who does nothing but nurse their patients!"

"That will do!" Landry's voice, cold and hard as nails, broke in. "I am very sorry to lose you, Miss Hopkins; more sorry to lose you in this way than I can tell you. But you are right. It is best that you go. It is not right that you should be subjected to such insults longer. Come," and taking her arm he helped her down the stairs, and then they went into the office and closed the door. In less than five minutes they came out.

"You are sure that is right?" Landry asked.

"Yes, doctor. I drew part of this month's pay, you remember, when I took Nina home." Evidently Landry had been paying her off.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THAT night we talked over a plan. At first I wanted to go to the seashore; but when Landry said that he wanted to go to Horning; that he thought mother might need attention, and that he also had some business there, I said no more. Really, it mattered little where I went so long as he was with me.

Mother was delighted. Randolph seemed to improve almost immediately and I lay all day on the couch, until I, too, began to feel like myself once more. We had not taken the nurse with us, but Landry had one of the young nurses from the Horning Hospital come over to relieve me. Randolph seemed very fond of her and we had no more trouble on that account.

Landry remained a week. Then he and mother both insisted that Randolph and I should remain a couple of weeks longer. I demurred, but finally consented to stay. The more readily that Miss Hopkins was not with Landry.

Homer Carleton came nearly every day and took me for a long ride in his roadster. Once he asked:

"Do you run your car much, or are you timid in New York?"

"I never have run it," I replied.

He gave me a quick, understanding look, and said no more. I wished sometimes he didn't understand me so well. It gave me an uncanny feeling of helplessness when I was with him.

"Don't you care for me a little?" he asked one day on our way home.

"I've never pretended I didn't care about you!" I said, perhaps a trifle too hastily. "I'm very fond of you when you—behave."

"Fond!" he answered. "I dare say! And you are fond of Bridget, of Jordan, of many people. Why I expect you are fond of bonbons!" he bent his head, and looked at me with a quick upward flash. "Isn't it more than that, Sybil?"

"What puts that into your head?" I said lightly.

"You aren't the kind of a woman to encourage a man unless you cared."

"Do I encourage you?" I repeated inanely.

"What do you call it? You give me your society; you seem to enjoy mine."

"As a friend, yes." "

"But I am, not satisfied, Sybil. If you were really and truly happy, as I told you in New York, I never would say a word. But you are not. I can see that you have grown even more unhappy since I last saw you. What is it? Is Landry having another affair?"

"What if he is! I am not the kind of a woman who, because of pique, would give herself to another man. Most men would have understood," he winced, "especially one who claimed to love me." It was a telling blow—but he deserved it. Then I told him not to come for me again.

"All right, Sybil! Now I will tell you my news," he said with a quick change of tone. "I shall offer myself for service."

"You will! But they won't send you. It is all just a scare. It won't amount to anything."

"Whether it does or not, I shall offer myself and my fortune. Uncle stands behind me. I shall join the ambulance corps at first. My knowledge of driving will

make me of more use there than elsewhere. So they tell me. I wish I could have gone feeling happier about you, Sybil. For whether it is right or wrong, I love you. But never while you live with Landry will I speak of it again."

"You hadn't meant to go if I—needed you?"

"No! But I shall leave immediately for New York. Good-bye, and don't quite forget me."

When I retired that night I tried to take myself to task. Homer had said that I had encouraged him. But I found that I wasn't at all horrified that Homer was in love with me. I felt a sort of comfort in the fact, as I had before.

But one thing I felt for the first time. That we were really at war. What neither Landry nor Janet had been able to accomplish he had done. It was because he was ready and willing to do. He had said that he was giving his fortune; and that his uncle was behind him.

"Homer is going," I said to mother in the morning.

"Of course!" she made reply. "What else could he do? He has no one dependent upon him, and he is young and strong. It is to such as he we have to look for our salvation," she finished solemnly.

Before night he had gone. He would not come back to Horning, although it might be some time before he would be ordered abroad. Some way I felt very lonely, and before I slept I shed a few tears for this big boy who had loved me.

Randolph and I remained the two weeks as planned, then I wired Landry to meet us. The first thing that struck me was that he wore that same look of spiritual exaltation I had seen the night he told me America was at war.

But I soon forgot it, and was retailing my news.

"So Homer has gone. He can do much good. His expert handling of motor cars will be of great assistance. And you say he has given his fortune?"

"Yes, and he said that his uncle was behind him."

"That isn't so strange. Mr. Carleton is an old man and hasn't long to live. But Homer is young; has always been accustomed to money. If he comes through it will be hard for him. Strange he has never married."

I wanted to shout aloud that it was because he cared for me that he never had married; that if he—Landry—cared nothing about me, others found me attractive. But Landry would have thought me crazy. I was now sure that not the slightest suspicion that any man had ever said a word of love to me ever entered his head—or that I would allow it. He gave me what I always had refused him—absolute trust.

Landry went out after dinner. For a little while I sat in the dark, the room lighted only by a slip of a moon. Then I went slowly downstairs. Landry had said there was a new magazine in the office that contained a war article he wished I would read.

I had read perhaps an hour when the telephone rang. It was Miss Smathers. She wanted money. Boldly she asked for it, and I knew by her voice that she had been drinking.

"I shall never give you money again," I told her and hung up, but not before I heard something that sounded very much like a threat.

About an hour afterward, just as I had dismissed the occurrence from my mind and was once more becoming interested in the article, the telephone bell again jangled.

"Hello!" I called, but there was no answer. "Hello,

what number do you wish?" I asked, thinking it might be a mistake. "This is the home of Doctor Jones."

"Yes, that's the place I want. Be you the doctor's wife?"

"Yes, why?"

"Mind that boy of yours—take good care of him—don't leave him alone," came back in disjointed sentences, in a husky, uneducated voice—a man's voice.

For a moment I stood paralyzed. Then I called frantically:

"Who are you?" but the wire was dead. He had rung off.

Quickly I ran to Randolph. He was quietly sleeping. What did it mean? Then came the thought of my refusal to give the Smathers woman money. Yes, that was it. She was trying to frighten me for revenge.

In the long hour that passed before Landry returned I tried to think what to do. That it was anything but a scheme to frighten me I never dreamed.

When Landry came in he remarked that I looked pale and wanted to know if I felt ill. I terribly longed to tell him of what had happened, for, in spite of my consoling myself that it was but a scheme of Miss Smathers to extort money from me, I was still a little frightened.

"I'm not ill," I told him, "only tired." Then I burst out, "And, Landry, I am tired of being a nonentity in your life, of being second in every way!"

"Why, Sybil! I believe you are ill!" Landry interrupted.

"I told you I wasn't sick! I'm just tired to death of being a doctor's wife. Why I believe you care more for seeing some miserable person with a broken arm or cracked spine than you would if both Randolph and I were stolen."

"What in the world are you talking about? You and Randolph stolen!" and he took my wrist and felt of my pulse.

"Oh, nothing! but if you would—oh, what's the use! I've begged you to do something else ever since we were married. To be a doctor's wife is to be no wife at all!"

"See here, Sybil, I believe you are ill. Do be sensible, dear," he said, using the same old plea, the words I so hated to hear—"do be sensible. To be a physician makes one more tender toward everyone. I am a better husband, believe it or not, a better father, because of my daily contact with hurt and bruised humanity. You see, too, Sybil, or you should see, that to make a success of anything in the world that we undertake we must give our very best to it: best energy, best love—the very heart of one. Anything else means mediocre success, which neither of us wants."

"How are you so sure what I want? I want love, attention. Instead of always having the feeling that you are with some other woman, wondering who it is, as I always am doing. I try to help it!" I answered his look, "try harder than you ever would believe. But I can't! It has been one woman after another making me miserable and unhappy ever since I married you. Oh, I am not just talking; I have suffered too much. It isn't fair for you to make me go on living this life."

"I have long seen the futility of trying to make you understand my point of view. But, for your own sake, Sybil, for the sake of your own peace of mind, why don't you trust me? I deserve your faith. I have done nothing to betray your trust. Our marriage never will be a successful one until you give me faith. You, to say nothing of myself, will never be happy, never contented."

"I never have been!" I broke in, "never but a few weeks at a time; and when we were first married—the very first months! If it hadn't been for Randolph I should have died! If I hadn't, I would have killed myself. Now you know just how happy I have been!"

I did not wait for his answer, but hurried from the room. When he came to me an hour later I was in bed.

"Drink this," he said without preamble, and I obediently did so.

"Ugh! it's bitter!" I said, making a face.

"It will make you sleep," he returned, as he shaded the light from my eyes while he prepared for bed.

"I hope so," I drowsily returned.

But I did not sleep, save in fitful snatches, all the long night through. Every little night-sound wakened me. I would raise on my pillow and listen. Twice I crept quietly out of bed and went in to look at Randolph. The second time I wakened Landry.

"What in the world are you doing, Sybil? Don't you feel well?" he asked as he switched on the light. "You'll take cold going around like that." I had not even stopped to throw on a kimono, so anxious had I been about Randolph.

"I went in to see if Randolph was all right," I answered as I crawled back to bed.

As usual Bridget took him for his morning walk.

"Where did you take him this morning?" I asked Bridget, who stood waiting to take off his outdoor clothes.

"To the park, ma'am. And, ma'am, that woman what come here to see you one day was in the park, and she asked me to let her take Randolph to see the swan-boats. I wouldn't let her, ma'am, rememberin' what you told me about lettin' him out of my sight, or lettin'

him talk to strangers. She acted madlike and swore at me."

"That's strange," Janet, who had just come in, said. "Who is she, Sybil?"

"A nurse Landry discharged from the hospital, I judge from what Bridget says," I answered as carelessly as I could; but feeling myself go pale. "Was there anyone with her, Bridget?"

"No, but O'Connor was on the beat, and if she had said anything more I was goin' to call on him. Her swearin' at me like that, and me a decent girl."

A consuming desire for help possessed me. I wanted more than anything else just then to tell someone of the telephone message I had received; the warning to look out for Randolph; to watch him. But Janet would surely advise me to tell Landry; she might even tell him herself. So I simply said:

"Stay to luncheon, Janet. Landry will be interested to know about Starr."

"Oh, he knows all about it now, I imagine." Again that peculiar look came into her face. "And I must go. Lottie Miller is coming to lunch. She telephoned me yesterday."

"Didn't I see in the papers that she had left her husband?"

"Yes, but she never was to blame," Janet said slowly. "No one can say one word against her character. She revolted at the tyranny he attempted. She absolutely wasn't allowed to think for herself. She refused to be deprived of all liberty. Since she left him she has refused to accept a penny from him. She has supported herself as private secretary to a society woman. She is also helping one of the war committees."

"But didn't he love her?"

"Perhaps—in a way."

"Did she care for him? Was she jealous?"

"No; I don't think she was jealous. I don't believe she would have left him because of any other women. She isn't that kind. But she couldn't endure his restrictions upon her; to be told she must not think this or that; to be constantly corrected and refused any liberty of speech. Why, he absolutely contradicted her simplest statements, and before her friends. It was really unbearable."

"I can imagine leaving a man only for one reason—the other woman." That Cupid had wings and could fly away I never remembered. While so jealous of Landry, I still believed that he loved me; that he always would, and that these other affairs were, well—just affairs.

I hated my practical humdrum life. I craved excitement at this time. I never had been particularly fond of gayety until now, but I figured that a woman must have something. It became another cause for contention. I wanted to go to theaters, restaurants; anywhere where there was life. And Landry was always busy now, even busier than before.

Then, too, I knew he missed Ruth Hopkins. The nurse he had in the office was inefficient—he said. When I asked why he kept her he replied:

"It would do no good to get another nurse that was pleasing to my patients. She would be sure to be unpleasing to you."

I said nothing more, knowing he meant that he should have a young nurse were it not for me.

Miss Burton was a little deaf, and several times had made mistakes in the calls on the telephone. Landry was very impatient of anything that looked at all like

negligence in anyone. It had been hard for him to excuse it in her. In consequence he was inclined to be irritable.

Was it any wonder that I longed for company, for excitement of some sort? That at times a fleeting thought came to me that had I willed it otherwise Homer Carleton would not have gone to war—would not have forsaken me?

These thoughts were not good for me at this time, but instead of pushing them away, I turned them over and over in my mind, speculating upon them.

Then all suddenly came a day when Homer Carleton was thrown bodily from my mind. A day when I received such a jar, that for a time at least I was absolutely impervious to all else.

Janet and I had been shopping. As we neared the house I saw Bridget come out the front door and look first one way, then the other.

"Bridget must be looking for the doctor," Janet said laughingly.

Just then Bridget spied us.

She ran down the steps, and in perfect passion of tears and sobs she told her story.

"The bell rang, ma'am, and that woman, that one what I told you about in the park——"

"Yes, yes, Bridget—Randolph!" I interrupted. "Stop crying this minute and tell me where he is." But she only sobbed the harder.

"Bridget, be quiet," Janet said sternly. "Now tell us as quickly and as quietly as you can what has happened. Don't interrupt her, Sybil, or we'll never find out."

"Well, the bell rang, ma'am, and the woman, she asks for you. I tells her you ain't home, you has gone

out. She says she will come in anyway and she pushes right by me and goes upstairs where I was stayin' with Master Randolph, just like you told me."

"Yes, yes, go on!"

"Well, the telephone in the office was a-ringin'; then that new nurse down there—oh, if Miss Hopkins hadn't gone it wouldn't have happened nohow; but that new nurse she hollered for me to come down, she couldn't nowise understand what someone was a-wantin'. That woman heard her, and she said for me to run along, she'd mind Master Randolph until I got back. I wasn't gone a minute, ma'am, not a minute, but when I got back they was gone! I looked all over, but they was clean gone away," and the girl caught hold of my hand with quivering fingers and sobbed, "You believe I didn't mean to lose him. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Gone! Randolph gone, and with that woman!" I stood dazed, helpless.

"I'll tell O'Connor, ma'am. If you say so. He knows that woman. He saw her the day she talked to me in the park."

"Yes, run and tell him, Bridget. It may do some good. It can't do any harm," Janet said, as she put an arm around me. "Don't look like that, Sybil. They can't be very far away. And we know who has him. I wonder why she took him. Perhaps she only went out for a little walk until you returned."

I groaned. I knew why she had taken him. Revenge because Landry had made her lose her position and because I had refused her money.

"You run to that corner. I'll go this way. Perhaps we may see her," Janet said, and I did in a mechanical fashion as I was told. But with no hope of seeing her in my heart.

"We must find Landry," Janet said. "He will know what to do."

We hurried into the house, and into the office. He was not there, and the nurse stupidly could tell us nothing of what he had said about returning. If Miss Hopkins had been there, I thought, then stifled the feeling that she might have helped me.

"What shall I do, Janet? I shall die if I don't do something! Oh, I know! I'll call up the nearest police station."

"Yes, do. It can't do any harm. And while you are doing it I'll search the house again. The little rogue may be hiding. That woman may have had nothing to do with his disappearance. She may simply have become tired waiting and left."

"Is this the police station?" I asked, and upon being told it was, I said: "I've lost my little boy. He's only been gone about fifteen or twenty minutes. He went away with a big, plainly dressed woman—yes, oh, Mrs. Jones; Mrs. Doctor Jones."

"What's all this? Whom are you telephoning?" Landry's voice interrupted. I scarcely ever used the office phone, hence his surprise.

"The police station—yes, that is the number," I said in reply to a question. "Yes, he is here now; just came in."

"Will you tell me what is going on?" Landry insisted as I hung up the receiver.

"He's gone, Landry!" I cried, throwing myself into his arms.

"Gone? who's gone?"

"Randolph—Randolph's gone!"

"Randolph—gone?" Landry repeated, his face growing white. "How——"

"Bridget came down to answer the telephone, and when she went back upstairs he and the woman were gone," Janet explained.

"What woman?"

"That nurse you discharged from the hospital," I added.

"How did she get in? I thought I had forbidden you to see her!" Landry exclaimed harshly.

"I was out. Bridget was on the steps when Janet and I came home. She said they hadn't been gone but a few minutes."

"Where's Bridget?"

"Gone to look for Randolph," Janet said. I was so weak I dropped into a chair and let her do the talking.

"But why was he left alone with that woman? I don't believe he is in any real danger; she wouldn't dare harm him because we know who took him. But why wasn't Bridget with him?"

"Sybil told you, Landry, that Bridget came down because Miss Burton asked her to answer the telephone. So she left them alone for a moment. When she went back they were gone," Janet again explained.

"I see! Another result of letting Miss Hopkins go," and Landry looked so sternly at me that I burst out crying.

"Tears won't do any good," he said, as he once more called the police station, explaining at a much greater length just what had happened. Then he called the hospital. He asked for Jim. When he got him he said: "Hello, Jim, this is Doctor Jones—do you know where Smathers lives?—when did she move?—yes, you are sure?—let me know immediately—and Jim—try and find out where she is now—tonight. She has stolen my boy," his voice broke on the last word.

Just then Bridget came in.

"He's lost, he is! I can't find O'Connor either. He's not on his beat." The tears ran down the poor, faithful girl's cheek. "Oh, doctor! what for did you ever let Miss Hopkins go? It never would have happened if she had been here—never!"

"I know it, Bridget." He laid his hand kindly on her shoulder. "No one blames you."

"But he blames me because I was the one made Ruth Hopkins go," I thought, so adding to my anguish.

"I asked every single person I met," Bridget sobbed, "every one if they had seen them two. One woman said she thought she had. She said the little boy was so pretty, and the woman he was with had been drinking, she thought. But she hadn't watched which way they went, so it didn't help me none."

Landry quieted Bridget by telling her again that no one blamed her in the least, and that we would surely find Randolph. In answer to Janet's inquiries about Jim, he said that Jim was Smathers' beau. That he had told him that Smathers had moved a couple of days ago, and he hadn't yet found out where. But that she would surely communicate with him and he would let us know at once.

It was Jim, I thought dully, who had called me on the telephone, warning me. If my impression was right, he was telling the truth and did not know where Smathers was.

"Don't expect me back until I find that woman and—Randolph," Landry said sternly; then went out, leaving us looking at each other for comfort, but finding none.

"If I could only find O'Connor!" Bridget wailed. "He knows Master Randolph. He'd know what to do."

"Suppose you go to the station house where he is stationed," said Janet practically. "It will be better than sitting here doing nothing. I'll call a taxi for you and stay here near the telephone. Do you know which station it is, Bridget?"

"Shure I do! Ain't he told me many a time."

"Oh, Bridget," I moaned, "what if we never find him?"

"We will that; don't fret, ma'am!" she answered, her own tears falling like rain. "O'Connor will know what to do."

Some way her faith in her O'Connor gave me a ray of hope also. I dried my eyes and begged her to stop crying also. When we reached the station we both got out of the taxi and hurried up the steps. The only thought in my mind was how empty the world would be without my Randolph. He had been gone only an hour or two, and yet how I had suffered.

Bridget led the way. I followed. As we entered a large room there, perched on the desk before an officer was Randolph, a stick of candy in his hand, his little dirty, sticky face wreathed in smiles. He was chattering away in his baby voice as contented as if he were at home.

"There he is, ma'am!" Bridget shouted, as if I could not see, "and there's O'Connor! sure, and why didn't you fetch him home? A nice fright you have been a-givin' us!" she scolded, caring nothing for the curious gazes fixed on her, nor the broad grins with which his mates regarded both her and O'Connor, who blushed crimson.

Instantly I took my baby in my arms, his sticky little face pressed close to my cheek, down which, in spite of my happiness, the tears were again flowing.

"Oo's c'yin'," Randolph said, wiping my eyes with his chubby fists. "Wat oo cy'in' 'bout?"

"About you!" I laughed through my tears, hugging him closer still. Then I turned to the officer sitting back of the desk. "How did he come here?" I asked.

"O'Connor brought him. He'll tell you all about it. We have just telephoned your house that he is all right."

"You see, ma'am, I know the little chap," O'Connor explained, while the rest smiled. "And one day I saw that same woman, a bit over the bay she was then, ma'am, begging your pardon, talking to Bridget here and the boy. I didn't much like the look of her, so today, when I saw her leadin' the little chap along, I just followed a bit. It was near time for me to go off duty, and I spoke to her. She told a cock and bull story—beggin' your pardon again, ma'am—about you telling her to take him a-walkin'. But as I ain't never seen him a-walkin with Bridget without the little go-cart along, too, I thought it were strange. Then he had no hat on either. There was an accident just then, not much of a one, but it took my attention. When I went to look for them again to take them along with me she had cleared out, leavin' the boy. So I brought him here with me. That's all, ma'am."

"The woman should be arrested. Of course, someone, you or your husband, will have to appear against her if anything is done about it," the sergeant, as I learned afterward, told me.

"I don' 'ant's to go 'ome! I 'ant's to stay wiv him!" Randolph said, pointing a finger at O'Connor, and commencing to cry.

"Don't you want to come home to papa and auntie Janet?" I asked.

"No!" he said decidedly. "I 'ant's to stay here."

But by dint of coaxing and a promise to ride out to the cab on O'Connor's broad shoulders we got him away.

"I wish you could see your face, ma'am," Bridget said as we neared home. "It is most as dirty as Master Randolph's," and she laughed hysterically.

"Of course it is! Hasn't he been rubbing his dear dirty hands all over me. Mother doesn't care, does she, precious? We never shall let him out of our sight for a single minute again, shall we, Bridget?"

"Indade we won't, ma'am! but I told you O'Connor would find him."

"He's a fine man, Bridget. You are a lucky girl to have so nice a beau."

"It's teazin' me all the time he is; he wants to be married."

"Don't you, too?" I asked.

"No, not yet, ma'am! Jim is that husky he'll be most likely goin' to war. I don't want to spoil his fightin' them Germans by havin' him thinkin' he must be careful of his skin because he's a wife in America. No, I'll wait a spell."

Janet was at the door when the cab stopped.

"You have him! you have him!" she cried excitedly, "and here comes Landry; he must have heard."

Landry ran as he saw us, and he carried Randolph up the steps without a word. Janet fell back with me, and whispered:

"That woman telephoned. Shall I tell?"

"Tell me quietly," I replied, frightened by something in her face.

"The telephone rang. I answered. A woman's voice asked for you, and I said you weren't here, that you had gone out. I told her that the doctor, too, was out. she said:

“ ‘Tell Mrs. Jones to be careful what she does. I’d have a story to tell in court as well as she would.’ When I tried to speak she had hung up. What in the world did she mean, and who was it?’ ”

“It must have been that nurse. She probably meant that, as Landry had discharged her, she would tell some lie about me to square herself for taking Randolph. It was only done for spite. I don’t believe she meant to keep him,” I returned, knowing full well that Smathers referred to another matter.

Janet soon left, and I sat trembling at what was hanging over my head. That I had brought it upon myself was no comfort. Smathers, if arrested, if forced to go to court, would tell of my paying her to bring me tales about my husband, not once, but several times. It would be terrible to have people know I had had anything to do with such a woman; that I had questioned her and had taken her into my confidence. What should I do? Landry must not have her arrested. I would call the station house, tell them it was all a mistake, and to say nothing about it. Which I did. They seemed rather astonished, but were very polite and asked no questions.

Then came the belated thought.

If Landry insisted upon having her arrested I should have to tell him of all I had done, or allow the scandal which would ensue to ruin him. He would consider it in that light I well knew—as ruin for him. Then he would hate me, perhaps.

At dinner I noticed that Landry was excited. Very much excited, in fact. I began to tremble. Perhaps he had seen Smathers and heard her story. She might have threatened to ruin his practice if he had her arrested. But he did not mention her name, although he

spoke of his gratitude that nothing had happened to Randolph.

"Every hospital is to send its unit," he remarked after something I had said. I seldom spoke of the war; but anything was better than to sit wondering what was coming.

"Yes."

"A certain number of both nurses and doctors will go," he said, in a peculiar tone. "I shall be very busy. And until she goes I have asked Miss Hopkins to come back to me. She will not do so unless you ask her. But I can't depend on Miss Burton, and I know of no one as capable as Miss Hopkins. Aside from that, she knows my patients, most of them, and they all like her. Will you ask her to return here until she goes to France? She was one of the first to offer when they asked for the nurses' unit."

I thought swiftly. If I gave in to Landry in this would he be more lenient with me about Smathers? I disliked to have Ruth Hopkins in my house. I hated her. But Landry said she would soon leave New York.

"I suppose I can ask her," I said ungraciously. "I told them at the station house not to expect us to appear against Smathers. It would hurt your practice to have her talk about us."

"You did! Well, perhaps it is for the best. It wouldn't sound well to have it told that you gave her that ten dollars for her dirty lies. I don't think she will try any more tricks—in fact, I know she won't. Please write the note to Ruth Hopkins to-night."

CHAPTER XL

AFTER dinner, when I wrote the note to Miss Hopkins, I recalled that Landry had spoken of her as "Ruth Hopkins." He was calling her by her first name. A sure sign of intimacy. Perhaps it was as well to have her where I could in a way watch them until she went away.

"Miss Hopkins," I wrote, "I would be pleased if you would forget what I in my excitement may have said and would assist Doctor Jones until you leave for France.

SYBIL JONES."

It was a hard thing for me to do. So hard that had I not almost lost my boy and been afraid of Smathers I could not have done it, not even for Landry. But I was very frightened, very much afraid of Smathers. I realized that Ruth Hopkins' presence in the house was a sort of protection.

When I gave the note to Landry he read it; then, without a word, he took it with him to post. I imagined from his face he wasn't too well pleased with the wording. But he realized it was all I would do, I think; so said nothing.

He called her "Ruth" I said over and over to myself after he had gone.

I had always loved music, and many nights when alone I would sit for hours at the piano, improvising scraps of things which began nowhere and had no ending—apparently. But the darkness and the soft music always soothed me; and I often played on until I heard Landry's key in the door.

But to-night I had played only a few minutes when Erica, the new maid, came in with a card.

I touched a button beside the piano and turned on the lamp at my side.

"Show him up," I said wonderingly.

Before I scarcely realized the maid had left the room, Homer Carleton was bending over my hand. A metamorphosed Homer, and in uniform. I fairly gasped when I saw him. He was absolutely handsome, and so distinguished looking. I had not risen to meet him, but sat motionless as he hurried toward me.

I saw him in a different way than ever before; from a different angle. Up to now he had been a good friend, a pleasant acquaintance, a generous host. I had forgiven, almost forgotten his love making, so little importance had I attached to it.

"I am on leave, Sybil. I came direct to you. Are you glad to see me?" he said, still holding my hand.

"I told you not to come—didn't I?" I greeted him.

"I know you did," he replied, taking my other hand in his eager grasp. "I know you did, Sybil. And I tried not to—I tried to stay away. Honestly I did!" he said in his old boyish fashion. The boyishness that had always been one of his greatest attractions.

"But you said——"

"I know!" he interrupted. "I said that I never was coming to see you again, and a lot more rot. And do you suppose I haven't tried to keep away? But just the moment I was free my thoughts flew to you. I have only a couple of days, Sybil. I had to see you. No one knows when they will send us across. I had to see you," he repeated. "God, Sybil! don't you know I love you? and that I am only flesh and blood like other men. I had to see you."

He still held my hands and tried to draw me to him. Yet I felt in some way so flattered; so impressed with his changed personality, that I thrilled at the thought that this man cared so much for me that in spite of my prohibition he had come at once to me when released from duty.

He wore the uniform of a first lieutenant, and wore it so well that I might perhaps be excused for admiring him. But even a uniform could be no excuse for letting him make love to me, which he surely did.

He bent over me, and kissed my hair lightly.

"You mustn't, Homer! oh, be sane, do. Remember what I told you when I was in Horning. Remember what you said. You promised never to say a word of love to me again."

"I know! and this is how I am going to keep it!" he declared, drawing me to him and kissing me. "I am sane. It is you who are not. It is you who insanely go on living half a life when, with me, you could have been all, everything! Why, you have told me that Landry cared for Louisa Lawrence; that you mistrusted him even in the first year of your marriage. You yourself told me of his liaison with that stunning blonde patient of his, that Mrs. Hyde. You never have been happy," he declared. It had no semblance of a question. He simply made the statement.

"Oh, Homer, you must stop!" I said, distressed, yet in a way glad that this distinguished looking officer cared so fiercely.

"How can I stop? Tell me that! or better still, tell me how to stop loving you. For days after I have been with you I catch myself remembering things you have said, the way your hair curls on your neck, the curve of

your lips, the tones of your voice. Oh, it isn't so easy to stop as you seem to think it is."

The front door opened.

"Hello, Sybil!" Landry called. "Any messages?"

"No, Landry. But I have company," I said as calmly as I could. He always came up the stairs quickly; but that night he was in the doorway, greeting Homer with a surprised welcome, before I realized he had heard my remark.

"Well, Homer! this is a surprise," he said, as Homer slowly crossed to meet him. "Home on leave?"

"Yes, a couple of days."

"I see you have your straps."

"Yes."

Landry immediately commenced to talk of the war, and nothing else was spoken of until Homer left.

What had come over me, I wondered, as the door closed behind Homer? I had cared absolutely nothing for him save for the good times he gave me, and the feeling of pride that I was attractive. But that night there was a different quality in the emotion he aroused. It was not love—that I knew. It couldn't be, when I loved Landry as I did. It was, I finally decided, an increase of pride in my ability to hold the soldier as well as the man.

"Doesn't Homer look fine?" I said to Landry. Not that I wanted to speak of him; but I feared Landry would think it strange if I didn't.

"Brass buttons and a uniform do wonders for a man in a woman's eyes," he replied carelessly.

"But it seems to have changed him, himself, in some way," I returned, thinking of the transformation I had noticed.

"Yes, I have noticed a change in Homer. He doesn't

seem as frank and boyish as he used to," Landry said.

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" I quickly rejoined, fearing Landry had noticed his changed manner toward me, however carefully he had tried to hide it. "I meant he looked so distinguished; seemed to be more of a man than before."

"Yes, I think he looks very well. And more serious than I ever have seen him. It is enough to make us all serious; to make us think of others. I believe we are only on the fringe of the war, Sybil. God knows what will happen before it is won."

"Oh, don't be so pessimistic, Landry. The war will not last long now that the Germans know we are going to fight."

Landry did not answer. And I soon forgot all about the war. But long after he slept I thought of Homer and his love for me.

That I was deliberately playing with fire, and might be harmed, troubled me not a bit.

By telephone appointment I lunched with Homer next day and he looked so handsome, so distinguished in his well-fitting uniform that I was proud as a peacock as I walked to the table he had reserved. I saw the admiring glances cast at him, heard some of the whispered comments, and he took on an added value in my eyes.

"That's the way it affects men when others admire their wives. They feel proud that they have something that someone else admires, and—desires." That again I was playing with fire by allowing my thoughts, such thoughts, to sway me never occurred to me.

"Tell me, Sybil. Is that pretty nurse still with you?" Homer asked, apropos of nothing, as the waiter moved away to fill his order.

"She is back!" I snapped, still sore at heart over the fact. "I asked her to come."

"And Landry made you write her, eh? And yet you repulse me, knowing that he is unfaithful; that he compels you to have her in the house."

"I haven't said that Landry was unfaithful!" I returned, loath to let Homer know that I was not appreciated at the value he set upon me.

"But you think he is," Homer said, just as the waiter appeared with the luncheon.

After this a silence grew up between us. I could easily divine his thoughts, but I would not awaken them into speech. In half an hour he would be on his way so I made no reply, preferring that the subject should be dropped. Finally he looked straight into my eyes and said: "I shall dream only of you—over there," and then he put his hand over mine and held it until I withdrew mine. A few moments only, it seemed, and he had gone. I watched his cab until it faded from view, then walked up the steps into my home.

CHAPTER XLI

It is almost impossible to describe how I felt in those days after Homer sailed. It would be some time ere we would know if he arrived safely. The German submarines were afloat, and there was grave danger to the ships. I could not set myself at anything for any length of time. I felt unsettled, worried, uneasy. Yet I don't think I loved Homer Carleton, or that any feeling approaching love actuated me. It was a species of restlessness, augmented by Landry's failure to be interested in anything or any subject save that of war.

Starr Jordan had also gone. He had written Janet of the great work the Red Cross and the nurses were doing. Janet brought his letters over and read them to Landry. Then they would talk of war, what it might mean, the hardships it had brought others, and probably would bring to us were it not soon ended. I used to fairly writhe as I listened. I hated the very thought of war in connection with Landry.

Then one day we had a cable.

"A French port. All safely landed. Homer."

I was very glad to know Homer was safe, yet my restlessness did not leave me. I think it was the constant discussion of the war by Janet and Landry that kept me impatient. Then one day Janet, too, left. She had graduated from the school of automobile mechanics, so that besides being an experienced driver, she was capable of repairing and caring for the ambulance she took with her.

Her father and mother, Landry and I went down to

see her off. Her mother was very brave and smiled and chatted until the ship sailed. But her father wiped his glasses very often and Janet herself had all she could do to keep from breaking down when she saw him.

Landry had suggested that they dine with us. And they had gratefully accepted. I hurried down into the kitchen to tell Bridget. Then took Randolph into the living room with us, so that Erica could help her.

Landry and Mr. Hedler were talking of the need of doctors. Of the great need of expert surgeons. I could not interrupt, as I might had Landry been talking to a younger man. Yet I longed to scream at him to stop, not to put ideas into Landry's head. I purposely made Randolph cry to cause a diversion.

Long before dinner was over I wished Landry had not asked them to dine with us. We were scarcely seated before Mr. Hedler returned to the subject of the need of surgeons in France. He talked so seriously, so emphatically, that all poor Mrs. Hedler and I could do was to eat and listen.

"What in the world was Mr. Hedler so interested in that he had to ask you to come to his office to talk over?" I asked when we returned to the living room after they left.

"Oh, he was discussing a philanthropic question with me. He is a very wide-awake, generous man. The good he does with his money is incalculable. Such as he should be wealthy," parried Landry.

"I thought he was talking about the war again. I nearly went mad at the dinner table, and I imagine Mrs. Hedler felt much as I did."

"Now, Sybil, can you imagine Mrs. Hedler going mad over anything?" We both laughed.

The day Ruth Hopkins had returned to the office I

had said "Good morning" to her, and she had replied in her usual tone of what I suppose most people would call sweetness. To me it was acid vinegar.

Bridget was unaffectedly delighted at Miss Hopkins return. I overheard her telling Erica that she felt as if some one had died when Miss Hopkins left.

"I sha'n't be home to luncheon," Landry said as he arose from the breakfast table next morning. "I am to lunch with Mr. Hedler."

"And discuss his charities, I suppose," I replied.

"Yes."

It was raining and I decided to remain at home and write to Homer. I made several beginnings before finally getting started. "Dear Homer," I began—"We were glad to receive your cable. Landry said he supposed by this time you were dreaming of winning the war. Do you know that Landry envies you. Think of it! He said that 'Every red-blooded man envied every man who gave himself to his country.' The idea of envying a person who is likely to be shot. You mustn't let them shoot you, really you mustn't, Homer. We should all be grieved if you were injured.

"Janet is on her way. She will join Starr somewhere near Paris until she is sent elsewhere. If there is one single thing she doesn't know about automobiles I would like to hear what it is. You never saw anything like the way she worked. I miss her dreadfully. Landry and I shall have to find some new acquaintances if all our friends persist in going to the other side.

"Ruth Hopkins is back. Landry seems much happier since her return, and I am correspondingly disturbed. How I do hate that girl. There! I couldn't say that to any one but you. You always were sort of

a safety valve for me. You don't mind my calling you names, do you?

"I am sending you a packet of magazines and papers. I hope they reach you. Let me know if there is anything you want and can't get over there. Landry is lunching with Janet's father. He has some benevolent scheme on foot, something connected with the hospital, I guess.

"There is really no news. You have not been gone long enough for any to accumulate. It seems so strange to send a letter 'Somewhere in France.' I wonder just where you are and what you are doing. We were so relieved when we received your cable that you had arrived 'over there' safely.

"Yours as always,

"SYBIL."

"What was it that Mr. Hedler wanted to talk to you about?" I asked Landry when he came in to dinner.

"Principally the war—what he could do to help."

"Oh, let us forget the war. It seems to me no one thinks of anything else. I sent Homer some magazines to-day."

"Let us forget the war! I sent Homer some magazines to-day," he repeated. "Be reasonable, Sybil."

"But I get so tired of hearing about it. And do you know that unless we make some new friends, we will soon have no one to go out with or visit?"

"The war, Sybil, is going to do a lot of things to us that we didn't expect. We will have little heart for visiting, or for unnecessary and useless pleasure. Then, too, we will be required, as good citizens, to help the government all we are able. That will use any superfluous cash we may have."

Randolph was getting such a big boy, he was lots of company for me, yet never had he in any way made up for neglect, or what I called neglect, on Landry's part. Some women seem not to care what a man does after they have children. They seem to be so wrapped up in the children, that they do not notice when they are neglected and left alone. But, while I think I loved Randolph as much as other mothers loved their children, he never compensated me in any way for lack of Landry.

Yet he was at a very interesting age. And I was extremely proud of his bright little mind and handsome face, as well as loving him dearly. Landry was so busy he had but little time for his boy, but was a kind and indulgent father. Erica, "Ica," as Randolph called her, was very trustworthy, and, aside from a fear of Smathers, which would occasionally creep in in spite of Landry's reassurance that I need not worry, I felt no hesitancy in leaving him with her at any time.

I frequently would wonder what his life would be. He looked so much like Landry; it was startling at times. Would some woman be jealous of him? This seems silly, when his age was considered, yet I have no doubt that many mothers speculate in the same way about the future of their sons and daughters.

"What do you suppose he will be, Landry?" I asked one day.

"A doctor, of course!" he replied, smiling.

"Not if I can help it!" I retorted; "one doctor in the family is enough. No, anything but a doctor."

"Not over that foolish notion that a doctor is necessarily all bad?" Landry asked.

"I don't say they are all bad. But I do say, as I always have said, that they have more temptations, are

thrown with women more than men in other professions. There should be a law against doctors marrying, just as there is against priests."

"There are celibates enough in the world, as it is," was his reply.

It still continued to rain, so I decided to spend the day doing little odd jobs that I had long had in mind. Arranging, rather, rearranging bureau drawers, looking over clothing in the closets and such things.

I started with Landry's chiffonier. He was rather disorderly, and I smiled as I untangled neckties and put in place the smaller items of his attire. He would be lost without a woman to look after him.

That finished, I tackled the closet next. Some of the things he never would wear again, so I laid them aside. I found a little change, a cigar or two, and, finally, crumpled in a vest pocket, a piece of paper.

Absently, I smoothed it out. But as soon as I saw the writing, all my indifference left me. It had been written by Louisa Lawrence.

Only too well did I know that handwriting. The top of the paper had been torn away. "Hopeless" was the first word I could make out. Then:

"But, Landry, while I am sorry for myself, I am more sorry for you. Sybil, with her jealousy, her lack of trust in you, will never make you happy. I shall soon be gone, but it racks my heart when I think of you and the brilliant future which might have been yours had you married differently or remained single. Remember, Landry, when the time comes, th——" Here the paper was again torn, leaving the unfinished sentence.

I could scarcely wait until Landry came in. The idea that Louisa should write him like that! How did she dare? That she was gone made no difference in my

anger, my indignation. I'd show Landry Jones that he couldn't fool me.

"What is the matter, Sybil?" he asked, when he came in. "You look very solemn. Don't you feel well, or is it this depressing weather?"

"Neither! It is this!" and I laid the note before him. "I want to know what else Louisa said. Nice thing for her to do, to put on paper that she was sorry for you because you had married me. Even if she did want you herself, she might have had the decency not to say so! What was it you were to remember? Tell me!" As usual, I had become so excited that I almost lost control of myself.

"I have forgotten what it was she wished me to remember," Landry said, and, for the first time since I had known him, I knew he lied to me.

"No, you haven't; you just won't tell me."

"Louisa is gone, Sybil. Cannot you at least forget your miserable suspicions, now that she isn't where she can annoy you?"

"No, I can't! I suppose Ruth Hopkins writes you notes now, or perhaps that Mrs. Hyde. I know that Hopkins girl is in love with you. I've watched her when she looked at you. I won't have her in the house! I'll tell her you compelled me to write that note asking her to come back. And I'll also tell her I know why she swallows anything to be near you. You can't fool me any longer about her."

"First you storm about a dead girl, then about Miss Hopkins," Landry replied, in that cold, quiet tone he used when he was terribly angry. "You may think you are the kind of a wife to keep a man from seeking understanding and companionship elsewhere, but you are mistaken. Not many men would have endured what I have.

I should not, had my profession not taken up my mind to such an extent that I have been able to put your conduct from my thoughts; your lack of any one quality which would make a helpmeet for me."

"That's right! Because you are guilty of making love to other women, find fault with me," I stormed, amazed at his answer. "I knew I shouldn't marry a doctor. I was told I should be miserably unhappy if we came to New York. Louisa said so, but I didn't believe her. She evidently knew you, your falseness, better than I did. But let me tell you that if you find nothing lovable in me there are others who have. I know at least one man who would be glad to take your place. And a fine man at that. He doesn't think me an idiot because I am not interested in horrid sick people, and all sorts of disgusting operations. And——"

"I am glad you have told me this, Sybil," Landry interrupted, a look of almost gladness in his eyes. "It will make things easier."

"If you mean it will give you more license, you are mistaken. I am your wife. I shall insist that you give up Ruth Hopkins!"

"You may not have a chance," he returned, enigmatically.

As usual, after giving way to my temper, I had a raging headache. But it did not prevent my thinking of Landry's looks when I told him that another man cared for me. I meant Homer, of course. I could not understand the gleam which had come into his eyes, he looked as if he were glad.

Of course, I was mistaken, he couldn't be.

Between my headache and my thoughts I had worked myself into quite a feverish condition. Landry noticed my red cheeks, and gave me something in a glass, saying:

"You better not get up to dinner. If you want anything, Erica will bring it to you here."

"Oh, I'll get up! If I don't, you'll have another reason to say that I am not companionable," I sneered.

"I shall say nothing——"

"What? Why don't you finish your sentence?"

"I may not be where you are very much longer. That's all."

"What do you mean by that? If you have Ruth Hopkins in mind, you may as well not think of it. I never will divorce you, never!" I exclaimed in my excitement.

In a moment I was sorry. Why, perhaps he never had thought of divorce, and I was putting it into his head.

"I was not thinking of any one at the moment," he responded, in a dignified way. "I was simply thinking that I might serve my country soon."

"What can you do? You'd have to do something here. You have a wife and child dependent upon you. You can't go away," I said, not really thinking he meant to go. But using the same old argument I had used ever since we had entered the war.

"It isn't settled yet. When it is we will talk about it. You may be sure neither you nor Randolph will suffer."

"I should say not! A man's, even a doctor's, first duty is to his family. And the government recognizes that fact, whether you do or not. You see, I haven't forgotten that you have always told me that your profession came first with you. I suppose I should be thankful that Uncle Sam isn't a physician, or he might agree with you," I said, trying to joke a little.

I tried to rise, but the pain in my head caused me to fall back with a groan.

Next day a Mrs. Comstock came over greatly excited.

Mr. Hyde had had a stroke of apoplexy, or something of the sort, and never had recovered consciousness. They had buried him in California, and Mrs. Hyde was still staying on in Pasadena.

When Landry came in I told him, watching him keenly as I did so.

"I knew it," he returned.

"I might have known you would," I said. "I suppose you have written her."

"Yes, I wrote her a line as soon as I heard. I was not surprised. His excesses had undermined his constitution to such an extent that he had lost all powers of resistance."

"Now I suppose you will have her back here again," I returned. He made no answer, but turned and left the room.

The more I dwelt on the different phases of my life the more discontented I became. I was not unhappy when I had things going as I wished, yet underneath all was a feeling of discontent which found vent in almost constant fault-finding.

I think now as I look back that my intense jealousy had changed and soured my whole nature. I had been jealous of every woman with whom Landry had been especially thrown in contact ever since we had been married. Of course, I suffered from this jealousy. What jealous woman does not suffer?

Sometimes I would hug Randolph closely in my arms and say:

"Thank God! you're not a woman!" and he would return happily:

"I'se a boy, I is," and then strut around the room, a disdain for everything feminine on his childish face.

Landry had changed. Instead of trying to reason with

me when I gave way to my jealousy, or my temper, he would either say nothing, or leave the room. It seemed almost as if he had laid down a line of conduct for himself and was determined not to overstep it in any way. Neither did he turn back or try to comfort me when I wept and sobbed over what my imagination did to make me miserable.

If he mentioned my outbursts at all, it was simply to remark coldly:

“You will make yourself ill.”

But I didn't! Whether my feelings were not deep enough or whether I had become so accustomed to giving way to them that the bad effects were negligible, I do not know, but aside from an occasional headache I was seldom ill.

In my knowledge of Mrs. Hyde's widowhood, my thoughts of Ruth Hopkins were not as acutely disturbing. Yet I was sure that Landry cared for Ruth, and that they had planned to be together—if by any possibility Landry could get to France. But I assured myself that he couldn't, so I dismissed the idea.

CHAPTER XLII

"It was terribly late when you came in," I said to Landry the next morning. "You must have had a lot to talk to Mr. Hedler about."

"I did."

"What was it, something for the hospital?"

"No, something more nearly concerning me personally."

"What do you mean?"

"He is talking of establishing a base hospital in France."

"Well, what has that to do with you?"

"He wishes me to take charge of it. The surgical part."

"The idea! Didn't you tell him you wouldn't?"

"No, I did not. I told him I would think about it."

"I don't see why you told him that! You know very well that you can't."

"No, Sybil; I do not know that I cannot do it."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. And perhaps it is as good a time to talk things over as we will have."

"There is nothing to talk over. You can't do anything of the sort. You cannot leave me, nor Randolph."

"Other men have left. There is no reason why I shouldn't."

"Other men are wealthy, they have left their families well provided for."

"I should not leave you unprovided for, Sybil, neither you nor Randolph. I have attended to that. I have

had it in my mind for months to go. I haven't told you because—well, it seemed unnecessary to discuss it longer than was necessary."

"Is Ruth Hopkins going?"

"I hope so. If not with me, later."

"Will she be in the same hospital with you?"

"Yes."

Suddenly I thought I understood. Landry was leaving me, and was trying to make it as easy for me as he could. He was going to France, and Ruth Hopkins was going also.

For a moment I could not speak. I simply looked. Landry's face, as he saw me looking, flooded crimson.

"We have not been happy, Sybil, neither of us. You have hated my profession always, and because of that you never have tried to make me happy. We have been at cross purposes ever since the day we married. It is better for you as well as for me that we end it."

"So that's what you mean?" I gasped, knowing it was true, yet not able to really grasp it.

"Yes—that is what I mean."

"And—Randolph! What of him?"

"I shall make no claim. You have been a good mother. I shall leave the boy with you."

"But you can't leave me! I have done nothing that would give you the slightest ground."

"I differ with you, Sybil. There are other things besides unfaithfulness that make life not worth the living. I wish I could make you understand and realize what my life has been, lacking the slightest sympathy in my work or my plans. That you have been unable to see anything save yourself, your own wishes, to all of which I cannot give words. I have no unkind or bitter feelings toward you, but if you cannot realize, I must do

it for you—that we have come to the parting of the ways. It will be hard for you at first, perhaps, but it will grow less so as time passes. You told me a very little time ago that others would care for you if you were free. I hope and believe they will, and that in a different atmosphere you will be a happier, more contented woman. You started out hating my profession. You wanted to hate it, and you have succeeded admirably.”

“A man can’t leave a woman for the things you have mentioned,” I declared. “Just because he sees fit to want to be with——”

“That will do, Sybil! As I said, it will be hard for you at first. It will also be hard for me, especially as I must be separated from Randolph a great part of the time. I shall hope to see him occasionally. You know I love him, but I feel I can leave him with you with a clear conscience. I believe there are few better mothers, and that you will bring him up to be a good man.”

“You talk as if you were leaving me permanently, and at once!” I returned, not yet really grasping the fact that I was incapable of making him change it. He was like that. He was slow to decide, but once he had made a decision he never changed. “And you, proud as you are, are willing to have your name dragged through the courts as a man who deserted his wife for no cause save that he wanted to have another woman with him—I know that’s what it is!—even if you haven’t said so, and have tried to throw the blame on me.”

“Yes, Sybil. For the sake of my work, the future happiness of all concerned, I am willing to do even that.”

“When do you propose to leave?” I asked sarcastically, not even yet thinking that there would not be some way out.

“Very soon. Now that you know, I will keep to the

office as much as possible. I do not want to embarrass you unnecessarily."

Just then Erica announced Mrs. Comstock, and the remainder of our talk had to be postponed.

Landry soon left us alone, and she said, apropos of nothing:

"Oh, Mrs. Jones, what do you think Mrs. Hyde is going to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied, "something foolish, perhaps. Is she coming back?"

"Yes, and no! She is going to Europe, to Paris, to nurse in the hospitals. She has been taking a course in nursing, commenced as soon as she was able after she reached California. Even while Mr. Hyde lived. She intends to use her great fortune to help the war. She will, without help from any one, equip and look after some hospital, besides going herself as a nurse.

"You don't act a bit interested. I thought you would be crazy about my news."

"She was a patient of Doctor Jones, but I never knew her. To be honest, I never wanted to."

"Oh, but she is perfectly charming! You should know her. And to think of her giving her fortune away as she is doing. That is what it will amount to. She is so tender-hearted that when she gets over there and sees all the suffering she will just give away every cent she has. I know her."

"Is her fortune very large?" I asked, still thinking and wondering.

"Very! up in the millions. Jim Hyde knew how to make money. And he left her every penny, and he didn't tie any strings on it, either! She can do anything she wants. Now Mr. Comstock is very generous with me, but he thinks women don't know how to handle

money. If he should die, I'd probably have to ask some executor or lawyer for every penny I spent," she rattled on.

"When is she coming?"

"Oh, right away. She may have started. She said in her letter that I would see her almost as soon as I received it. She knows I want her house and there is a good deal to attend to."

"Naturally," I replied.

It sounds terribly cold and detached as I write it, but in truth it was far from that. I was furiously jealous, and hurt. I never had really thought that Landry would leave me, even though he had said several times he would send me from him. That he had deliberately made up his mind to leave me forever I could scarcely grasp.

I cried, I raged, and I pleaded, all to no purpose. One minute I would declare that I would not divorce him; the next that I would let all the world know that he never had been true.

"That would be a lie, and you know it," he said sternly.

"But you can't leave me, Landry! You can't!" I exclaimed, knowing all the time that he could—and would, if he had made up his mind.

"I have arranged all my financial matters with Mr. Hedler. You can go home with your father and mother or live where you choose. There will be enough for you to live simply. Later I shall hope to make it more—if I live. If the other thing happens to me, you will have my insurance. And——"

"I thought we had lived up nearly all you made," I said, not because it interested me, but I wanted to object.

"Those bonds that uncle left me that I supposed

worthless have turned out to be very valuable. I am quite a rich man."

"How long have you known this?"

"Several months."

"Has Ruth Hopkins known it?"

"No—why should she?"

"It's strange if you have gone so far as to plan to marry her that you shouldn't have told her of your good fortune."

"Marry her—who said anything about marrying Miss Hopkins?"

"You said she was going over to that hospital where you are to be, didn't you?"

"Certainly. She will go as a nurse. She will be appreciated over there. She is just the cheery sort the soldiers need."

"But who is it then you are talking about? You said——"

"Yes, Sybil! there is a woman, a brave, whole-souled woman who cares enough for me to give up everything she holds dear and go 'over there' and help me. She is like Margaret in her liking for everything connected with the profession, and, like her, is anxious to be of use."

When he spoke of this other woman his voice took on a tone I never heard him use save when he was speaking of some incurably ill person. A softness, a something I cannot describe, but which now angered me beyond all reason.

"So you have been carrying on an affair of which I knew nothing," I almost screamed.

"You weren't enough interested in me to know the things which were daily happening to me as I went about my duties. She, thank God, was one of them. A woman with a big heart and a wonderful understanding."

"That's right; praise her!"

"I could not speak of her and not. We will not mention her again. Now that you know, it isn't necessary."

I rushed into my own room. I walked the floor, and I said terrible things. Yet through it all ran a feeling of relief that it wasn't Ruth Hopkins. I think I should have gone mad had it been. I would find out who the woman was—that would be easy. Landry himself would probably tell me if I asked him. Then he'd see what I would do!

But the idea that he should dare dispose of me—my life—as he had done! I wouldn't divorce him. I still loved him and was suffering agonies because of him. How was it I never really suspected there was some one else? I had been blindly jealous of Miss Hopkins, had hated her so that I had not dreamed of another. Had Smathers not disappeared I should probably have heard of this woman for whom Landry was giving up wife and son.

Was I to blame that I couldn't like the idea of his being a doctor? That I hated the thought of sickness, and the talk of broken limbs, and disease? Then came the thought that perhaps no one was to blame; that it was just a thing that could not be helped.

I saw very little of Landry from this time on. He moved all his belongings down into the office, and seldom came upstairs. Once in a while he took his meals with me, but not often. He pleaded business, what he had to do to get ready to go away. His evenings he either spent where *she* was, I imagined, or with Mr. Hedler planning about the French hospital.

I had told no one, not even mother. Some way, as much as mother loved me I had an uncomfortable feeling that she wouldn't be very much surprised, although

she would be heartbroken over it. She loved Landry like a son.

I did not see Landry to talk to him until a couple of days after Mrs. Comstock's call. Then I determined to find out if he knew of Mrs. Hyde's plans. I had haunted the office, but had not been able to find any letter addressed to her, though several times I looked over the mail when Ruth Hopkins was busy.

"You have no right to divorce me!" I exclaimed in response to something he said.

"So you have said before, Sybil. But I differ with you. Every one has the right, it is their duty, to make something of themselves. Then, too, you have done nothing to make me care for you; nothing to keep alive the love I gave you when we were first married. That I have met, that I know some one whom I care for; who sympathizes with me in everything I undertake: who brings a keen mind as well as a loving heart into my life and my work, who is companion as well as mate, is not your fault. Yet, Sybil, had you been a different wife I should not have been attracted by the qualities I have mentioned. Don't think I am trying to camouflage behind your faults, I am not. It is simply that we are not suited to each other, never have been."

"You mean that you intend to—marry some one else?" I asked, yet even as the question passed my lips the incongruous thought came that already he was using war terms, already he was in thought at least "over there."

"Yes, as soon as you secure your divorce."

"But what if I refuse to divorce you?"

"You cannot! For your own sake you will have to free me, make yourself free."

"You mean——"

"Yes, I mean that if you do not I shall. There are countries, states, where gross incompatibility is reason enough. But I trust you will secure the divorce. I shall not contest it and it can be done with very little inconvenience to you."

"But the notoriety!" I gasped, not sure it was Landry planning so coldly; he seemed like some man I never had known.

"That, unfortunately, we will have to endure as best we can, both of us. But the world will understand that you are not to blame. That is the principal thing."

Then, after waiting a moment, he added:

"I have written your father and mother and Dwight. I felt that it was their due to know that I held you blameless in certain respects. And, too, I wanted them—if they can—to understand my viewpoint. I am very fond of them."

"You are a cold-blooded monster!" I cried, and flung out of the room to have another hysterical attack.

Bridget came into my room. She said she had knocked, but that I was crying so hard I had not heard her.

"You are making such a noise, ma'am, sure I might have broke the door down and you wouldn't have heard me," she apologized. "Sure is it sick you are?"

"No, Bridget," I said, wiping my eyes. "I'm not sick." What was the use of pretending, she would know before long. "What do you want?"

"Who do you think has come, ma'am?"

"I'm sure I don't know! Don't stand there looking at me; tell me what you have to say."

"Why, little Miss Hopkins, the little lame girl, is downstairs, and glory be she ain't no lamer than me. She walks off that spry."

"When did she come?"

"About an hour ago. Look out of the window! There she is now with Master Randolph and Erica."

I did as Bridget suggested. Yes, there was the lovely golden head bent over Randolph, as she talked to him. I opened the window and their voices floated up to me; hers loving, animated, Randolph's happy and coaxing.

"Where's her sister?" I asked Bridget, who had joined me.

"She's gone out; the doctor sent her with some woman who took sick in the office."

I hurried downstairs and into the street.

"Oh, Mrs. Jones!" and Nina flew into my arms. Not since Landry had first commenced talking about going to France had I been so happy as when this beautiful girl showed her love for me.

"How long are you going to stay?" I asked her after I had talked a while, all the time looking that her sister did not come back and find me with the child.

"Until Ruthie goes to France," she said, the tears filling her blue eyes. "Mother is here, too. I earned the money," she said proudly.

"You earned the money?" I repeated.

"Yes, I wrote stories for the children's magazines and illustrated them and earned enough so mother and I can stay till Ruthie goes."

CHAPTER XLIII

Just as Nina finished telling me of what she had done so that she and her mother could come to New York and stay until her sister left for France, I saw Landry coming along, and hurried into the house without saying anything further to the little girl. But that afternoon her mother called.

"I want to thank you and the doctor for all your kindness to my little girl when she was with you," the calm-eyed, stately-looking, gray-haired woman said to me. "I never can express what her cure has meant to me."

Some way I never felt so awkward in my life. I answered in a stilted manner, and until Randolph came running in I was really miserably conscious.

"This is the little boy Nina talks of so often, I suppose," she said, as he went to her at once.

"Yes, they are very friendly."

"Children are so much wiser than we of larger growth," she said in her quiet, cultivated tones. "They realize at once the need of companionship. He is a beautiful boy, Mrs. Jones. I lost mine."

We talked a few moments longer, then when she rose to go she said:

"I promised Nina to ask you if she might come over some morning and play with Randolph. Don't fear to refuse her if it is at all inconvenient."

"I shall be glad to have her," I said without thinking. The first spontaneous thing I had said during the entire time Mrs. Hopkins had been with me.

"Nina will be delighted," she returned, and then quietly bowed herself out.

After she left it came to me that she had not mentioned Ruth Hopkins at all. That her conversation had been strictly confined to Nina, then to Randolph. It was a dignified way to treat me, yet in a manner it made me feel small and as if I had done something of which I should be ashamed.

But Mrs. Hopkins and all that concerned her was speedily put from my mind. Mrs. Hyde had reached New York. My informant, of course, was Mrs. Comstock.

In answer to the letter I had written Homer, I now received one from him. Necessarily, it was very formal, and it was brief.

"Dear Sybil:" he commenced. "Well, here I am somewhere in France and right in the thick of things. At present I am driving an ambulance, but I stand ready to do anything wherever I can be of the most service. Not the most, but the utmost. It is a wonderful life, Sybil. It makes us seem so petty when we come up against the big things, doesn't it? The women are wonderful! Not only the French and English women, but our own American women are proving themselves real heroes. I am so proud of them. There is a rumor that Landry is coming over; is it true? Surgeons, good ones, are badly needed. Surgery is his strong card. Never should he have been a plain doctor. You shouldn't have allowed it."

I smiled as I read, smiled bitterly. I had almost spoiled his life as both plain doctor and as surgeon, so he had said.

"The weather is glorious. But we are only on the fringe of the war. The real war for we Americans is yet to come."

Then followed a few words intended only for me, words which would convey nothing to another; remembrances for those at home in Horning, a request to ask father to keep him informed as to his uncle's health and to see him occasionally.

Homer cared, if Landry did not, I thought; yet it brought no such comfort as it had before I knew of Landry's plans, and while Homer was where I could see and talk with him. Then, too, he had said the war was only beginning, or practically that. Perhaps he would change: he, too, might become so engrossed in the sick and wounded that he would forget me. Some way I felt terribly alone—terribly unwanted. And for the first time I sensed, but only very faintly, that I myself might be a little to blame. Perhaps I should have controlled myself better. But it was only perhaps.

One day I was busily shopping when two handsomely dressed women came and stood near me at the same counter. While being waited upon they chatted. Suddenly my attention was arrested by hearing them speak of Mrs. Hyde.

"They say that she is going to Europe as a nurse," one said. "Can you imagine her nursing?"

"You know that the rumor is that Doctor Jones, that handsome young doctor who operated upon her, is going, too. She has been going to the hospital where he operates every day since she came back. I have a friend there recovering from an operation, and she says the doctor is devotion itself, and that Mrs. Hyde seems to

care nothing for society or anything else in the world, only to be with him and to help him."

I felt faint and sick, but I pulled myself together to listen. If this were so, if it was Mrs. Hyde whom he had meant in our talk, I saw no hope of ever making him change his mind. That woman, whom I hate as I did, I had to own was fascinating to a degree seldom met.

"He's married, isn't he?" the one who spoke first asked.

"Yes, but she has been a nonentity in his life, so my friend at the hospital says. She never goes there, never has shown the slightest interest in any of the doctor's cases. While Mrs. Hyde, long before her own operation, was continually visiting the wards and doing all sorts of things for the patients."

"I tell you," the other one broke in, "if a man has a hobby of any sort, and most of them have, it pays a woman to pretend to be interested in it, whether she is or not. If she doesn't, he's sure to run across some one who is. You remember Nat"—here they moved away, and I lost the rest of the conversation.

So it was Mrs. Hyde! I would accuse Landry as soon as he came in after I reached home. I walked away, and, until days afterward, I didn't remember that I not only had not waited for my change but that I had left my parcel lying on the counter.

All the way home I thought of what I had heard. The more I thought of it the more was I convinced that they were right. That it was Mrs. Hyde for whom my husband was leaving me, and—perhaps his country. He could help in hospitals here as well as in Europe. But it would be impossible for them to live together here without unpleasant comment, while over there they would be simply a nine days' wonder, if even that.

Then, too, I wondered if those two women, evidently society women in the same class as Mrs. Hyde, were right in their deduction. I was not ready to concede it, yet it stuck in my mind.

"It pays a woman to pretend to be interested in a man's hobby, whether she is or not," that woman had said. "If she doesn't, he is sure to run across some one who is."

Then, too, they had said that Mrs. Hyde visited the wards and did things for the patients. Of course, she was after Landry, or she wouldn't have done it. No woman would! What interest could she possibly have in the ward patients? It was ridiculous!

I had been at home but a short time when I heard Landry come in. He was very busy these days, always either writing, or messing in the desk drawers or something. But I went down immediately I heard him.

"So that Mrs. Hyde is the woman you are in love with? The woman for whom I am thrown over. I suppose you are after her millions!" I sneered.

"Yes, Mrs. Hyde is the woman for whom I care," he said quietly. "I don't know where you got your information; neither do I want to know. I should have told you myself had you asked me. I have nothing to hide."

"You call it nothing to plan to marry another woman?"

"Under the circumstances, no! And remember, Sybil, I am leaving you free also."

"But you sha'n't marry her! I won't let you! The designing creature! This has been going on ever since we came to New York! Louisa Lawrence told me how it would be, and——"

"I would not interrupt, or deny for my own sake,

Sybil. But you force me to for—hers.” He dropped his voice. “Not until she was free did she dream that I cared for her, and it wasn’t easy to persuade her to promise to give herself to me when I should be free also. You must believe me or not, as you choose.”

“You confess that you have cared for her—before?”

“Yes, for many months before she went away. No man with an empty heart and life could help himself. I saw her day after day, an angel of mercy to my poor patients, giving not only her money, but herself, when she was unhappy, miserable because of her brutal husband.”

“I will go to her! I will tell her just the kind of a man you are! I will tell her of Louisa Lawrence and Ruth Hopkins,” I stormed.

“She knows all about your unreasoning jealousy. Has known it all along. Had you been like other women you would have become friendly with her when she first became my patient, perhaps then——”

He stopped.

“Why don’t you finish? Perhaps then she would have taught me how to be a good wife. Is that what you were going to say?”

“Something like that,” he confessed. “She might at least have influenced you. But, Sybil, what use are all these recriminations? The thing is decided. In a little while I shall be gone out of your life forever. It may be possible that I never shall return to this country, even if I live, after the war. It will help neither of us to quarrel.”

“But, Landry, if I promise to be different, to help you, never to be jealous or find fault again?”

“It is too late. And you never would keep such a

promise if it were not. You know you would not. After the first shock is over you will be happier than you have been with me."

"You know I would keep my promise!" I insisted, ignoring the latter part of his speech, yet knowing as I said it that it would be utterly impossible for me to keep my jealousy from him.

"It is too late, as I said. Now please leave me. I have a great deal to do now that Ruth has gone."

"She had the nerve to come up and say good-bye to me," I said, hoping to stir him out of his calm. A thing I seemed unable to do.

"It was a very kind and forgiving thing to do considering the way you have treated her."

"Of course, you would stand up for her."

"Why not? She was in the right."

I flung out of the office in a peculiar frame of mind. I wanted desperately to think of some way to prevent Landry carrying out his plans, but realized how perfectly helpless I was against the calmness behind which he intrenched himself. He must be very sure everything was going to turn out as he wished.

Then one day Mrs. Comstock telephoned me that Mrs. Hyde had sailed. I made up my mind to go to Mr. Hedler. She was out of the way. Perhaps he could help me persuade Landry to remain at home with me; to work in his own country instead of in France.

The fact that she was gone gave me courage. Landry had been away all that day, had not even come home for his office hours. I understood the reason. He had been with her.

Finally I got started. Then I told Mr. Hedler the whole story from my point of view, and asked him to

help me persuade Landry to remain in New York, to give up going to France and Mrs. Hyde.

"My dear Mrs. Jones, you have my sympathy, but it is too late to interfere. Doctor Jones cannot draw back now. The hospital I have equipped is nearly ready for him. As for Mrs. Hyde, I am more sorry than I can say, but I am an old man, my dear, and I shall talk plainly. Had you been my own daughter, I could not have blamed your husband for the stand he has taken. He is a brilliant and unusually capable man. He is almost a genius in his line. You have discouraged him, instead of encouraging; you have accused him of things which he never thought of doing; you have been a very bad wife to him although you are a good woman. It is strange that good women so often make bad wives," he said more to himself than to me, "so strange," he repeated.

"And you uphold Landry? You think it right for him to leave me?"

"I tried to prevent it, my dear Mrs. Jones. But just now there are bigger things at stake than just your troubles and my beliefs. Your husband is needed. He has decided his domestic matters. Neither you nor I can change him. I see nothing for you to do but to divorce him. You are young, and, you will pardon an old man, you are beautiful. You will find someone who will make up to you for all you have lost. If not, you have your boy."

I left his office feeling I had exhausted every resource. I would write mother and father, but I knew it would be useless. That they could not change Landry.

I wrote mother as soon as I reached home. I tried to write dispassionately, but several times I knew that my

letter showed the anger I felt. In a few days she replied:

"Dear Daughter: It is hard to write you, as I must, because you know how dear you are to me. But, Sybil, I have long seen this very thing coming. I feared it almost from the first. Landry was your husband, your lover. You drove him from you until he was simply your provider; and you a fault-finding housekeeper. My heart aches for you, my dear girl, the while I cannot unduly blame Landry. He needs love, companionship, approval. His life is under a constant strain. You have made the strain more acute. We have loved him like a son. We feel as if he had died. He wrote us a manly letter, telling us just how he felt, not excusing himself, nor blaming you. It has been a great sorrow. Father looks old and careworn. He has taken it very much to heart. As long as Landry is determined on his course, for father's sake have everything done with as little publicity as possible. Of course, you will come to us at once. Sell all that you do not want. Your old room is waiting for you, and so are your poor father and mother, with hearts full of love for you.

"MOTHER."

Mother's letter, to which I had looked forward longingly, proved cold comfort. She, too, told me plainly that I had been a bad wife. I began to wonder if I had been wrong all along, if I had been the one at fault. But I wouldn't entertain the idea. It would mean more misery.

Although I asked no questions, I knew the time was drawing short that Landry would be with me. He seldom came in now save for a few moments at a time. He had discontinued his office practice entirely. And

unless he was out, he and old Mr. Hedler, sometimes Starr's father and others, would be closeted in the office until long after I had gone to bed.

Janet had written me that Starr had seen Homer. That Homer was looking splendidly; and was doing good work.

"I am so busy," she said, "I have very little time for letters save to father and mother. See as much of them as you can. I sometimes feel afraid I shall never see them again. They are getting old, you know.

"I heard a rumor the other day that Landry was coming over to take charge of some grand new hospital! Homer has heard it, too. We certainly need hospitals, and more than hospitals, do we need men with Landry's wonderful genius. Could you see the terribly wounded, see their need of skilful physicians, you would not begrudge him to them. Yet somehow I know you will. But, Sybil, we must all do, not our bit, but *all* we can for our country and for suffering humanity. My heart bleeds for them."

Janet evidently knew nothing more than she had written. That Landry was to take charge of some hospital. Well, she would soon know. Would she, too, blame me?

Several times in the last weeks I had found Randolph with Landry if I came in unexpectedly. Then, too, I had watched him from the window fondle and pet his boy. How could he leave him? I thought, then remembered how full his life was, always had been, of other things. He loved his boy. I knew he did; yet he was giving him up to me without an attempt to keep him.

Suddenly it came to me that perhaps this was his sacrifice to me. He was giving me Randolph to make up for himself, for what he was taking from me. I felt a sudden thankfulness that I was to have my boy; and

was to have him without fighting for him—Landry's share in him a free gift.

From this time on I threw the little fellow in Landry's way as much as possible. If I had any hope that it would make him change his mind as regards me I did not acknowledge it to myself. That Landry was grateful he showed in several ways.

One night he called me into the office. A stern, middle-aged man was with him.

"This is Mr. Walters, Sybil, my lawyer. He will attend to everything for you. He understands all about the settlements. Go to him for advice upon any matter which troubles you."

The remainder of the evening was spent in going over papers, telling me just how the money I was to have was invested, how I could get what I needed; and all the other little details of which a woman like myself knows so little.

When I said good-night to Mr. Walters and went upstairs, leaving them to finish some business, I felt for the first time that everything was over between Landry and me. It is strange what a peculiar feeling cold business facts throw over one. Never from the moment that I left the office that night did I feel that I had any chance of holding Landry, of keeping him with me.

And yet Mrs. Hyde's name had not been mentioned.

CHAPTER XLIV

QUITE suddenly a longing for home, for mother, rushed over me. Yet I would not leave Landry. We lived almost as strangers, but I still clung to the idea that something might happen; that my luck would change and that he would give up his Quixotic idea of going to France, and—to Mrs. Hyde.

Just at this time I received another short letter from Homer. In it he spoke of having heard the rumor of Landry's coming; of the wonderful new hospital Mr. Hedler had endowed for him. Then after telling me of his health, he referred in a way so none but I could understand to my promise to marry him after the war if I still believed Landry false to me.

I imagined he had heard something about Mrs. Hyde and Landry. It made me furious that even people in Paris knew of my husband's infatuation for another woman. It never once entered my head that I was responsible for that infatuation. Or that I might have prevented it had I been a different wife to Landry.

Not even Homer's veiled love-making brought me any comfort. I almost hated him because he knew of Landry's defection.

The longing to see mother, to be loved and petted a little, made me write her a letter asking her to make me a short visit.

"Stay only a day or two if father needs you; but come," I wrote, inclosing a ticket.

She came immediately. When she folded me in her arms I felt that no matter what she thought she loved

me. That was the way I had wanted Landry to love me; forgetting, or not realizing that a man's love will not stand the strain which mother love endures.

That night we talked things over. Mother said no word in blame; but she made me understand that neither she nor father considered Landry entirely at fault. Landry had dinner with us. The first time he had dined with me in several days. He tried to be natural, to talk of impersonal things, but we were all thinking of one thing—the coming separation, and were glad when the dinner was over.

Mother saw him alone in his office for half an hour the next morning. When she came upstairs her eyes were red, and she looked so sad I was almost sorry I had asked her to come.

She wanted to take Randolph home with her, and also wanted me to promise to come to her immediately Landry had sailed. I would not do either. Randolph should stay until his father left. Something might happen. Also the house was leased for several months longer. I would remain until the lease expired.

"It would be lovely to be with you and father, but I couldn't face the rest of the people—not yet," I told her.

Before she went home, which she did the next afternoon, she talked with me about granting Landry's request and applying for a divorce.

"I believe it would be for the best," she said, "although I never have been in favor of divorces. But, Sybil, they love each other. They not only love each other, they are suited to one another. You may have to give him a divorce to save your pride. You would not wish it known that you were holding a man who was openly living with another woman."

I couldn't believe I had heard aright. Mother had been very strict in her ideas as to divorce. She must have changed very greatly. Then an illuminating thought came to me. She had reasoned with Landry, and he had declared his intention. I asked her, and she didn't deny it.

"You can get a divorce quietly in another state," she told me.

I raged against it in my mind, and to her. Then she added:

"You are young, Sybil. If you let them marry decently, happiness may some day come to you. But if you do not, you will still be tied, while they——"

Mother did not finish, but I knew what she intended to convey by the quick blush that mantled her cheeks.

CHAPTER XLV

As the days slowly passed I was almost sorry I had sent for mother. I felt the loneliness all the greater because of her two-day visit.

Once during this week I was alone with Landry for a few moments, something that seldom happened. I reproached him bitterly, saying many hard things which perhaps I should not have said in view of the coming separation; things about Mrs. Hyde; ugly things that would rankle in his mind, and make him dislike me more than he now did.

He turned from me and walked to the door of the inner room. There he stood for a minute, his back to me. There was an appreciable silence, during which I waited to hear what he would say.

"I dare say what I shall say to you, Sybil, because there is no earthly reason why I shouldn't dare." I had asked him how he dared to do as he was planning.

"You have been less than a wife to me. You deliberately set out to ruin me professionally almost from the first. If I needed any other justification it would be your insane, unfounded jealousy, your insults, which I have stood because of my profession, and because of—Randolph." His voice trembled slightly. "You were right when you said that you never should marry a doctor; why you did has been a constant puzzle. I supposed my love and yours for me would change that feeling into one of helpfulness and of pride in my advancement. But you, you knew you wouldn't change, so why did you marry me?"

"I thought you would give up being a physician, and——"

"You had it planned even before you married me to force me into some uncongenial employment; something for which I was not fitted either by education or inclination; something that would keep me dangling at your skirts, and where I couldn't speak to another woman. You hold your sex very lightly, Sybil, when you credit them with being as immoral as your words and actions have always implied. I had not meant to talk of this again, but you have forced me. Forgive me; I am sorry." He went out without giving me time to say a word.

Presently I got up and walked to the window. The same window from which I used to watch to see who was calling at the office. Once I thought I would go to Landry and beg him to give me one more trial. But just then he closed the front door, and without a look strode away. He had sold the little car which he had bought when I was at home—the car in which I had never set my foot, and which, I knew, had proved no pleasure to him because of my actions.

After I was sure Landry had gone I went into the guest room—he had been occupying it for some time when he did not stay down in his office, and went through his things. He had a trunk in the room half-full, another empty one, and bags, and cases for instruments. I opened the bureau drawers and looked them over. I saw that his shirts and socks were all in perfect order, and smiled grimly as I thought I had been a good wife in some respects. Then came the remembrance of what mother had said in her letter. That I, by my actions, had reduced Landry to the position of a

simple provider instead of a lover, and myself to the plane of a housekeeper.

"He could have hired all this done," I thought bitterly as I said it aloud, "and for much less than it has cost to take care of me." It was a punishment to go over all his clothes, to handle, look them over, then refold them. I didn't care to have him know I had done so. My tears fell upon each article as I laid them back in such a way he would not know that they had been disturbed when he finished his packing.

Just as I was leaving the room I noticed a picture of Randolph on the chiffonier. It had been in his office, and he probably was going to pack it.

"Anyway, I gave him to you!" I said fiercely as I picked up the picture. Then I added even more fiercely: "But he's mine! all mine; you can't take him!" and rushing to my own room I locked the door and gave way to one of my old hysterical sobbing, crying spells until Bridget pleaded with me to let her in, and then bathed my face and brought me some strong tea.

"You must kape well for the baby," she said, so letting me know that she understood.

Landry, having given up his office practice entirely, did most of his work at the hospital. So much of his time was spent with Mr. Hedler and the other men interested in the Paris Hospital that he had been obliged to drop his regular work.

I had been asleep when the continued jingling of the telephone bell wakened me. Just as Landry answered it the clock in the hall struck four.

"Yes, I'll come immediately," I heard Landry say, then in a moment almost the front door opened and closed.

"How in the world could he get dressed so quickly?" I said aloud. Some way it troubled me, and I got up and went into the other room, then down to the office. In neither place had his bed been touched. He had been sitting up all night long. Why, I wondered.

He had been writing. I picked up the closely written sheets, thinking that perhaps he had been writing to her. But I was astonished when I sensed that he had been sitting up writing to me. One sentence flashed out at me from the page I held in my hand:

"This is for you to read after I am gone."

Some way I could look no further, and replacing the paper just as I found it, I put out the lights and crept back to bed. But I did not again fall asleep. It was nearly seven o'clock when Landry came in.

I rose immediately and called Bridget.

"Get breakfast as quickly as you can. Doctor Jones has been up all night."

"Shall you be down, ma'am?"

"No, I will have my coffee upstairs as usual."

Just as I finished dressing Landry came up.

"Thank you, Sybil. I needed that coffee," he said quietly, then would have passed directly on to his room had I not said.

"You had a call. Was it an accident?"

"No, but an operation had to be performed immediately and Doctor Ward is out of town."

"Was it anyone I know?" I asked. It was a safe subject and perhaps he would remain and talk about it.

"No," he returned, a tired tone in his voice. "I think I shall lie down a few minutes. Bridget will call me."

He went into his room and closed the door. I heard him splashing in the tub, then all was still. I asked

Bridget what time he had asked to be called and she said nine o'clock. But at that time he was sleeping so soundly that she didn't succeed in waking him, and I let him sleep until ten. Then I sent her to call him again.

He dressed and hurriedly left the house, but he soon came back again, and I knew by the sounds coming from his room that he was packing. Could it be that he was going at once. He had said he was not positive as to the time he expected to sail. I had asked only once and he had said:

"It is impossible to tell. There is much to do before I can go."

I listened.

He went down into the office and I knew he was packing down there. His instruments, whatever he intended to take. His medical books had nearly all been boxed. What he intended to do with them I did not know.

For an hour he went up and down. Finally I could stand the inaction no longer.

"Would you like Bridget to help you, or can I?" I asked, more to satisfy myself as to just what he was doing than because I thought he would accept the offered assistance.

"No, thank you. I am nearly through for today," he said as he struggled with a refractory bag that seemed determined not to close.

I tried to ask when he was going but my mouth was suddenly dry. I could not frame the words and, turning, I left him kneeling on the floor working over the bag.

I put on my things and went out. I walked to the corner and bought the last edition of the daily paper. I searched it through and there was no mention of Landry

in it. He had been written up several times and his new hospital plan explained.

Mrs. Comstock and I went to a lecture one evening. It had been advertised as a lecture upon domestic subjects. Mrs. Comstock wanted to go because she thought she might learn something new about housekeeping, a hobby with her; and I went because it gave me something to do. I so dreaded my evenings alone after Randolph had gone to bed.

But the lecture proved far different from what either of us thought. It was an arraignment of wives and husbands who, as the lecturer put it, "broke their contract."

He went on to tell us that a woman who marries, allowing a man to think she was going to be a good wife in every particular, and then was not, had broken her contract; in other words, he said, "She has not delivered the goods." The same with the men. His entire lecture was a scathing rebuke to people who married and who were unwilling to fulfill the contract they made with each other.

He enumerated many instances of broken contracts; one I recall was the wife who before marriage showed pride and interest in her lover's achievements, but as soon as he was her husband, it was different. Then it was "that horrid old business," or something of the sort. It seemed to me that he was purposely hitting me. Could I never get away from people who misunderstood?

"I think we wasted our time, don't you?" Mrs. Comstock asked as we left the hall. "That man has a wrong idea of women, I think. Most women I have ever known are more interested in their husband's affairs than he seems to think. Why, I am as delighted over any success

of Mr. Comstock's as I can be. I know you are in perfect harmony with the doctor, and I have many other friends who never object by word or look to anything that makes for their husband's achievement."

I could have laughed aloud. She "knew I was in perfect harmony with the doctor." The irony of the speech. She would soon know that he had left me; that I was a deserted wife, and that only the fact that we were at war, and Landry, a physician whose services were invaluable to his country, had, or would, perhaps, save us from a horrid scandal.

"You are mistaken about Doctor Jones and myself," I said after an inward struggle. I might as well tell her, as have her learn it later, and have my side distorted perhaps.

"Why—what do you mean? You——"

"Just that the doctor and I are not congenial, never have been. It is partly my fault. I never should have married a doctor. I hate the profession and all that goes with it. I am naturally of a jealous nature," I went on quickly. Now that I had started I wanted to tell her all. "And to know that women are constantly closeted with one's husband is almost unendurable. I have been very unhappy," I added, making a womanish appeal for sympathy.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, "but I don't quite understand even now. Didn't you know he was going to practice when you married him?"

"Yes—that is, I hoped to get him to go into something else," I replied. The puzzled look on Mrs. Comstock's face made me wish I had not confided in her. I remembered, too, how very happy she and her husband were together; how she seemed to look up to him, and to think him quite perfect.

"But you really married him with your eyes open, didn't you?" she asked again. "He had not promised you to give up his profession?"

"No—I don't really remember asking him to—before we were married. I just trusted to my influence upon him afterward. I thought he would—for me."

"But he had studied for a physician. He is a wonderful surgeon. I can't quite understand."

"No, perhaps not; but if you ever had lived with a doctor you would have no trouble understanding," I said bitterly, "that is, if you cared for him and were of a jealous nature. Women have no hesitation making fools of themselves over a doctor—especially if he happens to be good-looking!"

"But Doctor Jones doesn't seem——"

"No, he doesn't seem like that kind of a man, but he is, and I honestly believe most doctors are!" I interrupted. "You will probably be shocked, but we have decided to separate."

"What?"

"Yes; Doctor Jones is going to Paris to take charge of a hospital there. So it is a good time to end it all," I answered, but not saying anything of Mrs. Hyde, nor my fixed idea that she, not the hospital, was taking Landry to France.

I had Randolph. Had I not I don't know to what lengths I might have gone in my rage and jealousy of Mrs. Hyde! As it was I stormed and cried all night long. He, Landry, was leaving me not to go to France, but to go to Mrs. Hyde—the woman who had supplanted me in his affections.

Landry came upstairs while the storm was at its height. He spoke so gently, he was so kindly firm in his attention, giving me a quieting draught, that I looked

at him almost hopefully. How resolute and strong he was. I recalled the times when he had been in love with me. Was there no spark of it left?

Suddenly I threw my arms around his neck. I pleaded with him to stay with me. I promised all sorts of things if he would do so. I told him it would kill me to be left; that I could not endure the shame of being deserted, and a lot more, holding him in an embrace which he could not loosen although he tried.

Finally he freed himself.

"You are not going, are you?" I questioned, rising and facing him.

"There is no doubt of it, so do not work yourself up in this way. It will do no good. I am sorry you felt it necessary to give way again like this. It is very unwise."

When he had left me I once more wept and sobbed. I knew it was useless, but how could I help it? Time after time I had made up my mind not to let him see me weep again; not to ask him to remain with me; then would do both. He would hate the very thought of me, when he was with the beautiful woman for whom he was casting me off.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE week flew by. I was in a perfect fever of unrest. Landry went quickly on with his preparations, until finally his luggage was all packed and waiting in the dismantled office. Whenever I thought of Mrs. Hyde I fairly gnashed my teeth in impotent rage. She was waiting for him over there. He was going to her.

The war had begun to assume most serious proportions; little else was talked of. The streets were full of soldiers marching to their camps and cantonments, or in groups of two and more hurrying along the sidewalks, their uniforms attracting much attention. Yet I scarcely saw or heard. The war meant nothing to me save that it had given Landry an excuse to be with her.

That last week I scarcely left the house. I watched Landry's going and coming from the upper window. He never looked up, so I never knew whether he was conscious that I watched. He had dinner with me two or three times, always asking if I desired it, then begging me to allow Randolph to sit up and have his dinner with us. Whether he disliked to be alone with me or whether he longed for his boy's company I did not know, and did not ask. But I had Erica put Randolph to bed late in the afternoon for a short nap, then had her place his high-chair beside his father.

I strove desperately not to cry. I had not lost all my pride, not quite all, and I hated the thought of Landry carrying about with him a mental picture of me with red and swollen eyes.

Those last dinners together were hard for both of us. Landry tried to talk of impersonal matters or of the war, the preparations going on in this country, the wonderful progress we were making. He often referred to the Teutons, his scorn for their way of fighting, their treatment of the Belgians. But he never mentioned France or his work. He knew I was inclined to break out into a rage at the former and that I was not interested in the latter.

Once, the day before he left, he talked a little about Randolph, his education. I made no reply, but I remembered every word he said; every wish he expressed.

When he had finished I made my last appeal to him to remain for Randolph's sake. I said nothing of myself, only pleaded the child's need.

"He is too young to miss me. You have been, will be, a good mother to him. It is not necessary to ruin several lives for his sake. And——"

"You mean yours and hers?" I returned.

"Yes, and yours. But we won't go into that. Totally aside from that part of the question is another. I may not live. I shall often be in danger even though I am not fighting the Huns. You then would have to care for him, to plan for his future, his education. I should like, if he lives, to have him go to Harvard—that is, if you don't object. All our family have gone there. And——"

Again I interrupted.

"I don't care where he goes, what he does, so long as he isn't a doctor!"

"I know how you feel about that, and you see that had I remained with you, that would have been another bone of contention."

"You mean that you would have wanted him to study medicine?"

"I certainly should. But now you can have your way with him. Mold him to your wishes while he is small, then perhaps he won't kick over the traces when he is grown."

Just then the doorbell rang and Mr. Hedler was announced. It was the last talk Landry and I had together.

He left the next day.

I cannot even yet describe that day. I kept fairly calm until he was gone. Mr. Hedler came for him and took him to the ship in his limousine. He ran upstairs and bade me good-bye and wished me the happiness I never found with him—then he took Randolph in his arms and when he put him down there were tears in his eyes. He quickly brushed them away, said a kindly farewell to Bridget and Erica, ran down the steps and was gone out of the house, and out of my life.

I watched until the car turned the corner; then I gave way to my pent-up feelings. All day and most of the night I raged at him, at her, at fate. I swore that I would not divorce him; he would find it was not so easy as he thought to throw me aside.

Toward morning I fell asleep from utter exhaustion.

When I awoke at noon, mother was moving quietly around the room.

"Why, mother!" I exclaimed; then as her arms swept around me I wept again, not tempestuously this time, but softly. She did not try to stop me, just held me close until I ceased sobbing, then without a word save a caution to lie still, she left me.

She returned in a few minutes with a tray on which

was a tempting breakfast. She talked of home, of father, while I ate it, then left me alone to dress, saying:

"It is a lovely day. After you are dressed we will take Randolph over into the park for a while."

It was after one o'clock before I forced myself to dress—a process torturously prolonged. At every stage I would pause and give up to brooding, unhappiness; several times I had to wipe the tears away so that I could see to arrange my hair.

But finally I was ready, and we started out.

Mother didn't talk much—she seemed to understand that I would rather be quiet. Her presence was such a comfort. I shuddered as I thought what the day would have been without her dear presence.

In spite of my sleepless, anguished night the walk made me feel quite myself again. When we had put Randolph to bed and mother and I were alone, I said:

"I know you want to talk, mother. Go on; I can bear it now."

For more than an hour we talked, rather mother talked, and I listened. Not one word of blame did she say, nor once refer to what she had said in her letter as to my being at fault for all that had happened. She talked very earnestly about my freeing Landry.

"We must not feel, Sybil, that you have forced him into an unsanctioned alliance. And I fear that would be what it might mean. You know Landry's determination once his mind is made up. The chances are that he never will return to America. You are or will be in an anomalous position—a wife, yet no wife. You know that I am opposed to divorce as a usual thing, but in this case it is the only solution. You are too young, too pretty, Sybil, to be in the position you will find yourself if you refuse to divorce Landry."

"But I shall have all the blame, all the notoriety to bear," I interrupted. "Landry is so far away he will not care."

"He will be so interested in his work, and—in her—forgive me, Sybil, that he will have no time to care. But it will be soon over. Mr. Hedler has promised to use his influence to keep it as quiet as possible."

Some way, as mother finished, the thought of Homer came to me. During all these last weeks and days no thought of him had entered my mind. Now there flashed over me the promise I had given him. What he had foreseen, had happened, only to a greater extent than he could have imagined. His idea had been that Landry would persist in carrying on a flirtation with first one then another (as I had told Homer had been the case ever since we had married) and that for that reason I would divorce Landry. What would he say when he learned that Landry had deliberately deserted me?

"Is there any way in which it can be hidden that Landry has thrown me over?" I asked bitterly.

"I am afraid not, my dear. Your divorce can be arranged on the ground of desertion only; and you will have to go to some other state for that. But it is the only way to prevent scandal in connection with it."

Mother sighed heavily, but quickly catching herself she smiled wanly at me. For the first time I noticed how old she had suddenly become. My trouble had aged her. I had been so wrapped up in myself, my miseries, that I had not noticed.

"But, mother, suppose I do not want a divorce! Landry may change his mind about—her. He is fickle, you know."

"No, dear; that is one thing I do not know. Landry never was the least bit fickle, dear. He loved you as

long as he could. Then, because she gave him the sympathy, the understanding you would, or could not, he transferred his affection to her. Had Mr. Hyde lived it never could have happened. Yet even then I believe that Landry would have left you. He would have gone to France just the same, and I doubt if he would have returned."

"You still think me to blame!" I declared bitterly.

"I had not intended to say a word of that, dear. But when you ask questions I must answer them honestly. Yours is a peculiar situation. One hard to deal with, hard to advise—yet I have put aside all my life prejudices to be fair to you; to advise you for your happiness."

"I know, dear," I laid my hand on her knee. "But if only the world could be kept in ignorance of the fact that he left me. I wish I had left him first, or that I had given him cause to leave me."

Mother remained with me for nearly a week, then father wrote that he didn't feel very well and that unless I really needed her longer he wished she would return.

Father was never happy when she was away from him. It had always been so. I could remember that when I was a little girl he always called her the moment he came home from business. It was:

"Mother! you there?" perfectly satisfied to hear her voice. If she didn't answer, he would call, "Sybil, where's your mother?" Then if she had gone out he would either walk down the street to meet her or restlessly go from one room to another until she appeared.

The days after mother left me were lonely ones. I had not put the room Landry had occupied in order, nor had I done anything to straighten up the office. So

now I busied myself looking over things he had left.

"Give everything away," he had said. "Or if not good enough, throw it away."

But I did neither. Perhaps later when I should have overcome the smart of his desertion I might do so. But now I had Bridget brush his clothes and hang them in the yard to air, then hung them back in the closet. So with the other things. I had everything nicely cleaned, then put away. The office I turned into a downstairs nursery for Randolph, the reception room I refurnished from the upstairs living room. I would now use the first floor of the house instead of the second.

This done, I was idly wondering one day how I should fill the time when I received a letter from Janet. When I tore it open the first word I saw was "Landry."

"Landry is here," she wrote, "and, Sybil, he is perfectly wonderful. He works day and night to help the wounded French soldiers. Our own men, too, may soon need his aid. Do you remember that once I said to you that we, our own affairs, our petty troubles, seemed of so little account in the face of this terrible war? Landry seems one of those who absolutely forgets self in his work for others. He is growing thinner, but says he is perfectly well.

"Mrs. Hyde is nursing. She is doing anything and everything any trained nurse does. It seems almost like a dream to see that delicately nurtured woman performing all the homely tasks that fall to the regular nurse. She is of the greatest assistance to Landry. He told me one day, after I had brought in a terribly wounded poilu, that she never had once flinched even when her duties were of the most disagreeable, almost disgusting, nature. It is fortunate he has such a woman with him."

Janet then had not heard. She knew nothing. I breathed a sigh of relief as I read on. She told of her work with the ambulance corps; of bringing wounded soldiers in under fire; of the dreadful scenes when they were maimed almost beyond recognition; of their bravery, their pitiful thankfulness for what was done for them, and how so much of everything was needed.

"Could the women of America only realize that we need everything—comforts for the soldiers, reading matter, bandages, sweaters, socks and mittens. Then, too, the little children are so pitiful. If you could see them, Sybil. Their starved peaked faces are so old. They look like little old men and women, not children. Do tell all your friends to do what they can, and do it now. Next week it may be too late to save some precious life."

I read this part of Janet's letter scarcely grasping its meaning. As I have said the war had seemed so far away; so cut off from me that I had scarcely thought of it at all, save as it had affected Landry. So now I turned back again and again. I read and re-read that part of Janet's letter in which she told of Landry, and of Mrs. Hyde. She thought Landry fortunate that he had such a woman with him; a woman who would not flinch from anything—to be with him—I added in my thoughts.

I was grateful that Janet did not know. It gave me a few moments of self-respect. I was very sore at heart over the idea that all the world would look upon me as a deserted woman.

When I answered Janet's letter I intrigued desperately to convince her that I was blameless, while I told her that Landry and I had separated. I would be first

with the story. Perhaps it might induce her to think more leniently of me.

In the days that followed the receipt of Janet's letter, and my reply, I read what she said of the needs of the soldiers and especially what she had written anent the little children. I visualized their pinched faces, and shuddered as I looked at Randolph so plump and happy.

Suddenly I became obsessed to do something for these children of stricken France and Belgium. In my enthusiasm for them, the soldiers seemed of little account. With a rush of joy I thought and planned what I should do for them. I would first enlist Mrs. Comstock's aid, and we would go about it methodically.

I had always loved children. To do for them would help heal my hurt; would, perhaps, bring some of the comfort to my bruised spirit for which I yearned.

Once the idea took possession of me I could not rest. I planned and made little clothes, warm substantial things which would be a comfortable fit for children between the ages of two and six. Some way I had more feeling for the tiny tots than for the older children.

I enlisted mother's help. She emptied her attic of all its burden of unused clothing, and got the neighbors to do the same. I had turned my old upstairs living room into a sewing room.

When the big drygoods box came with its wealth of treasure it fairly overflowed with good substantial clothing, either suitable to send as it was, or to remake into clothes for my children.

Some way, just working for those poor children seemed to bring healing with it. I ceased to rail so constantly at fate. I worked so hard all day that I slept from sheer exhaustion; healthy exhaustion from which I awoke rested and keen for another day's work.

"You mustn't work too hard," Mrs. Comstock said one day when I had been standing for hours cutting out the work, the little dresses and trousers for the half-dozen women to make. We had enlisted about twenty women who took turns coming to sew. So many on each day. But I worked with them all. When I was so busy I could not think, and to think was the last thing I wanted to do at that time.

"Don't worry, I am not!" I replied with a smile. "I love the work."

And I did. I do not even now believe I could have kept up my enthusiasm had I been working for grown-ups. But to do things for children—little children like Randolph—that was different.

Yet, busy as I was, a thought often intruded—always after I had received a letter from mother. Yet she never mentioned the subject. She never had since our talk directly after Landry left.

Should I divorce Landry?

He had been gone several months. Homer had written me, and he evidently knew no more than did Janet. Although he had hinted he thought it strange that both Mrs. Hyde and Ruth Hopkins should elect to go to France; and to become nurses in Landry's hospital. He also praised Landry's work unstintedly. His letter also was more serious. He, too, told of the fearful need of everything which could be spared them. There was now nothing of his old boyishness in his letters. He seemed to have suddenly grown old, to have grown away from me. It was only another proof of the elusiveness of things, I reasoned. And from that time Homer seemed more desirable than ever he had before.

All mother had said about Landry became daily plainer to me. He was constantly working side by side

with Mrs. Hyde. Should I save my pride to a greater extent if I freed him? Landry was not a patient man, although as I look back I sometimes wonder at his patience with me—he loved that woman, had said that he would marry her. When I thought of that I became cold, shivering cold. Yet in my lethargy I constantly put off action.

I had ceased to weep, to rail at fate. Yet not for one moment had I felt that I had been the cause of my trouble. I had not yet arrived at that stage, and I told Mrs. Comstock one day when we spoke of Landry that I never should feel at all to blame.

It was the first time we had mentioned him since the day I had told her we were going to separate. She now asked how he was getting on, and in reply I let her read Janet's last letter—a letter so filled with praise of Landry's work among the soldiers that there was little else mentioned. She said nothing of either Mrs. Hyde or Ruth Hopkins.

"It is no more than I expected from him," Mrs. Comstock said when she returned the letter, her eyes moist with emotion. Janet had depicted the sufferings the wounded bore in a way to make one weep. "And he had to go, you know, aside from everything else. He had to obey the call. I imagine to him it was like a bugle call for reveille. I am so sorry for Mr. Comstock. He wants to go over so badly, but, on account of his lameness, they haven't found a place for him so far."

CHAPTER XLVII

It had seemed strange to me that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hedler had written Janet about Landry's decision to remain away indefinitely. Later I knew it was just their real kindness of heart that had made them keep still.

It was, after all, a letter from Janet which finally prodded me into taking a definite step. She, among other things, said:

"Mrs. Hyde and Landry are still working together. Of course there is a little gossip about it, principally among the nurses. If any word of it comes to you do not let it trouble you. There is no need, I am sure. That Ruth Hopkins is one of the very best nurses we have. I often wish you had become better acquainted with her. I like her so much."

So there was gossip. Was there good cause, real cause? I wondered.

The day after I received Janet's letter I called at Mr. Hedler's office. We had a long talk, and before I left him it was settled that he was to help me divorce Landry. Then he was to manage it as quietly as possible; and that he was to let Landry know immediately that steps were being taken to free him.

"I will not have him living with that woman while I am his wife," I exclaimed in a sudden excess of shame and pride. "I will not!"

"Do not become so excited, Mrs. Jones. I will let Landry know at once that you have decided to free him."

"It isn't for his sake; don't you think it is!" I stormed, giving way for the first time in many long weeks. "It is for my own sake. He sha'n't live with her while I am still legally his wife! I tell you he sha'n't," and then I wept and sobbed in the old hysterical way.

The dear old man didn't know what to do, and begged and pleaded with me to compose myself. Finally he brought me a glass of wine from a little cabinet, and urged me to drink it.

"Please do," he urged when I shook my head. And he looked so worried, so comically anxious, that I went off into peal after peal of hysterical laughter. The old gentleman was now thoroughly frightened and called one of his stenographers to help him.

When finally I left the office it was with the assurance that everything would be arranged as quickly and as quietly as possible. I was to take Randolph and go to another state and establish a residence.

"It will do you good to get away," Mr. Hedler said. "Mrs. Hedler has told me of the work you are doing for the French and Belgian children. Here is a check to use for them. Let some one else do the work for a short while."

I did not look at the check until I reached home. To my astonishment it was for five hundred dollars.

I had gone immediately about packing what little Randolph and I should need for the time we would necessarily be away. I would take Erica, and leave Bridget at home so that the work for the children would not be interrupted because of my absence. Mrs. Comstock would take charge, and everything would go on just the same as if I were there.

Mr. Hedler's check would provide the necessary ma-

terials, so I would not be needed to solicit, something I did with great glee for the children, but which I would have absolutely refused to do for any other charity.

I was nearly ready to go when the postman brought me a letter in an unfamiliar handwriting. I opened it, thinking it something connected with the work we were doing. To my surprise it was from Nina Hopkins. She wrote:

“Dear Mrs. Jones—My precious mother died last week. We buried her Sunday. I thought because dear Ruth lived with you so long that you would like to know about it. Ruthie won’t know until she gets my letter, and it takes a long time for a letter to get to France. The neighbors have been very good; but it is terribly lonesome without mother. The house seems so still. I am trying to go on writing my stories just the same, but it is hard not to have her to read them to. I can’t write any more, it makes me cry. Your little friend,
“NINA HOPKINS.”

“P. S.—Please kiss Randolph for me.”

My eyes were full of tears when the childish letter fell from my hands. That dear little thing all alone in the house trying to write her stories as usual, but with no one to read them to. In thinking of her I almost forgot my own trouble.

All that day, as I finished packing and looked after the work to be done while I was away, that pathetic little note of Nina Hopkins was in my mind. I remembered the golden-haired, sunny-tempered little girl, and how fond I was of her in the short time we had had her in the house. Had I not been so insanely jealous of her sister I would have known her better.

Late that afternoon a thought came to me. Quickly I put on my hat and ran around the corner to a telegraph office, and sent the following message:

"I will come to you tomorrow. Randolph will be with me."

Then I hurried home lighter in heart than I had been since I commenced my preparations to go away.

I should have to go quite near where Nina lived to get to the little town which Mr. Hedler had recommended as a good place for me to live while getting my divorce. I would stop and see the child. And perhaps—well, just perhaps. I would go no further in my planning until I had seen her.

Never shall I forget with what delight I took the beautiful girl in my arms and tried to soothe her. She had grown far more lovely than as I remembered her. The golden hair was still just as golden, the eyes the same wonderful violet shade; but her face had filled out, she had grown tall and lithesome, and was graceful in all her movements. She had absolutely none of the awkwardness of girls of her age. She was now nearly fifteen.

"What are your plans?" I asked her when later we were sitting quietly alone while Erica and Randolph took a walk.

"They say I mustn't live here alone," her lip trembled, "I do so want to, but the neighbors and the ministers say it wouldn't be right. The house is mine, you know; mine and Ruthie's. But they say I must rent it until Ruthie comes back from France and board with someone——" She hesitated, choked back a sob, then, "Do you think it would be wrong for me to stay here?"

I could write better here. I would feel as if mother might hear when I read my stories aloud."

"No, I don't think it would be wrong, Nina, but it would be very unwise. You are too young to live alone, even in a small place. It would not be safe, as well as being unwise. Now what do you think of my plan?" While she was talking it had sprung full-fledged into my mind.

"What is it?" she asked listlessly. Her disappointment that I had agreed with the neighbors that she shouldn't live alone was very evident.

"I am going to a little village to—rest. Just Randolph and Erica and I. How would you like to go with us? Be my little girl for a while?"

"Really, Mrs. Jones, do you mean it?" and in a perfect passion of tears and sobs the lonely child threw herself into my arms.

"There, dear, you will make yourself ill," I said after a time. "Don't cry any more."

"Oh, they are happy tears," she said, trying at once to cease sobbing. "Happiness doesn't hurt anybody," she said in the quaint manner I remembered so well.

"We have a lot to do, so we must not waste any time even shedding happy tears." I was anxious to be settled, and anxious too to take Nina away from a place so filled with sad memories.

There was very little to do. We put the house—it was immaculately clean—into a real estate agent's hands. Paid a visit to the minister who had buried her mother. Told him who I was and that Nina was going to visit me for a time. He made no slightest objection, and the ease with which everything was arranged made me realize as nothing else could how alone the child was.

"I remember meeting your husband, madam," the

minister said, "when he came to see if anything could be done for the child. She owes him a great deal. He impressed me as a very kind, good man."

Strange that no one seemed to think Landry could do wrong. That people were so blind to the faults which seemed to me so glaring.

That afternoon we left for the town, only a few hours' ride away, where I was to make my home for a short time. Mr. Hedler said it was not necessary for me to remain away altogether, that I could come back and see how my work, which had become an obsession with me, progressed as often as I wished. But when we were settled in the little cottage he had rented for me, the ocean almost in the front yard, I felt that the quiet, the stillness of it all would make me willing to stay there forever with my darling Randolph, and Nina Hopkins, about whom I was weaving a plan which I would not divulge for some time.

The days went by, either slowly, or winged, according to my mood. I went back to New York only once. Mrs. Comstock had taken my place so competently that I was not really needed. So I returned to the little place away from all the bustle and noise, and spent the days walking on the sand with Randolph and Nina, and listening to her stories.

I had written Ruth Hopkins unbeknown to Nina. She replied immediately, thanking me for my kindness to her sister and agreeing that she should remain with me until her return. My delight was only equaled by that of Nina's. She fairly danced with joy when she found she was to return to New York with us. My time was up. Landry was free as far as I could make him. I had kept his name for Randolph's sake. So I was still Mrs. Jones.

About a month after I had my divorce I picked up the morning paper and carelessly glanced over the contents. Suddenly my attention was arrested:

“Doctor Landry Jones, the famous surgeon, and Mrs. Frances Hyde, widow of the New York millionaire, are married in France.”

I suddenly went sick. Sick all over. I sent Erica out to buy all the papers. I would look them all over—every one.

The old jealousy made me writhe in agony. He was mine! She had no business taking him from me.

As I feared, in one more sensational than the rest, my name appeared in large type:

“Mrs. Landry Jones divorces her husband. He marries the widow of the well-known New Yorker, James Hyde. They will live in Paris; while Mrs. Jones will still make her home in New York,” and a lot which was only a repetition of what I had read in the other paper, an eulogy of Landry’s work.

For days I hid myself from all but Nina and the servants. I could not bear to meet the sympathetic eyes of the public; even of those who were working with me for the children of Europe. But gradually I steeled myself for the ordeal; and once the break was made the comfort of work-filled days again made life bearable.

No one can imagine the joy Nina Hopkins was to me. I came to love her next to Randolph. She was a busy, temperamental soul, absorbed in her stories, yet always willing to leave them at my slightest call. She helped me through many dark days when my very soul rebelled—when it seemed that I could not endure to be Landry’s cast-off wife. I never tried to fool myself as to that, even while I did not consider myself at fault.

He had left me, not I him. Never would I let Randolph be a doctor.

Then one day Janet wrote:

"Homer Carleton is badly wounded. He may be blind for life. Ruth Hopkins is nursing him, so we know he is in good hands. Landry, however, does not hold out much hope for his sight even if he lives. Poor fellow! You should see how patient he is, although he is suffering horribly. I shouldn't be surprised if he were to fall in love with Ruth. Many of the wounded do come to care for the women who are so tender toward them, who nurse them back to health. I hope he will not. I should hate to see dear Ruth married to a blind man, even to Homer."

"Homer too!" I said bitterly. Some way I knew that Janet was right. That Homer was in love with Ruth Hopkins. It was just a fleeting impression; but some way, from that moment, I never thought of Homer save as in love with Ruth.

Then one day a letter came. A fine, manly letter in which Homer told me of his wound, of the loss of the sight of one eye, the other saved by Landry's skill. Then he spoke of Ruth Hopkins—what she had done for him, what she meant to him.

"Had you ever really cared for me, Sybil, I should have hesitated to write and ask if you are willing I shall marry her—if she will have me. You never loved me, that I know. All your love was given to Landry, and my heart has bled for you since I knew. I shall wait your answer before I tell Ruth of my love, although she must suspect how much I care for her. This life changes us, Sybil. You would find me very different from the old fun-loving man you used to know, the man

careless of others, wanting his own way. I shall leave myself in your hands."

I wrote Homer immediately. I told him that I never had considered him bound to me. I wished him all happiness, and asked him to plead with Ruth to let me have Nina, to adopt her and care for her as I did for Randolph. He did, and the very day they were married came her consent for me to legally make Nina my own.

I suppose I am lacking in some respect: that my nature is warped and out of tune, But now, after three years, I cannot yet feel that I have deserved the treatment life has given me; but I am making the best of what I have left. I am not resigned. I never shall be. Yet with my work, my boy and my dear adopted daughter, I try to be content.

Mother tries to comfort me by telling me that some day I will be happy, that I am young, and that God will not let me be lonely always.

I wonder!

THE END

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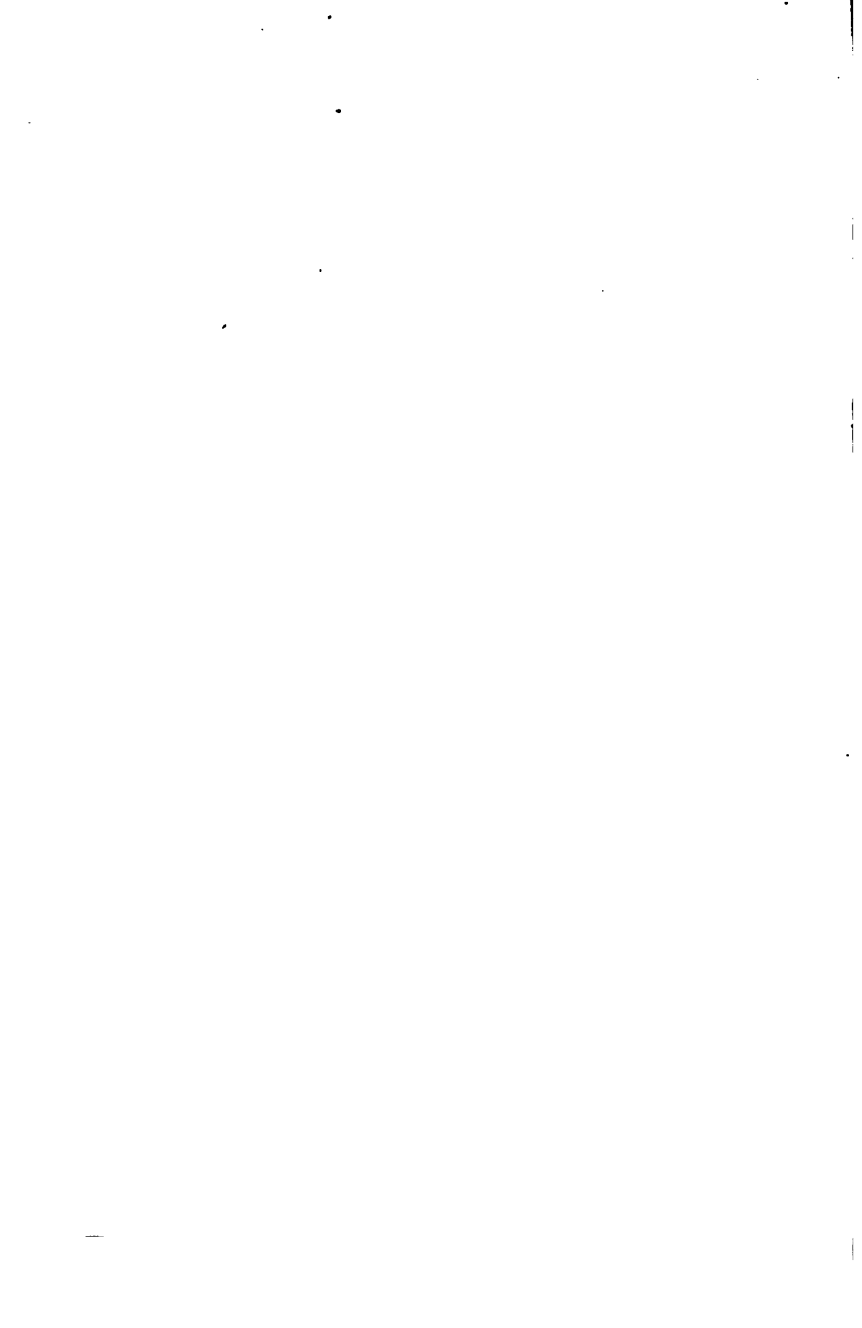
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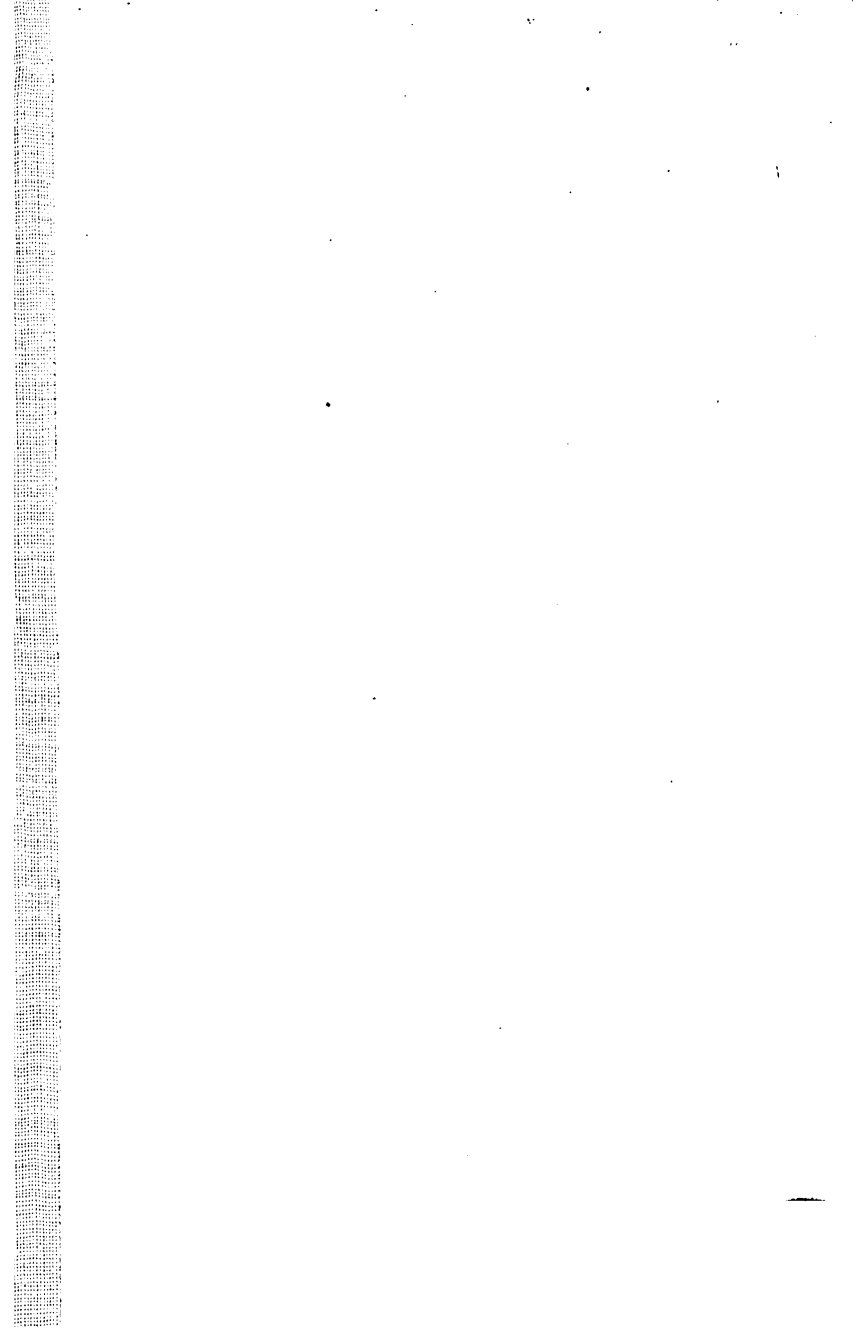
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